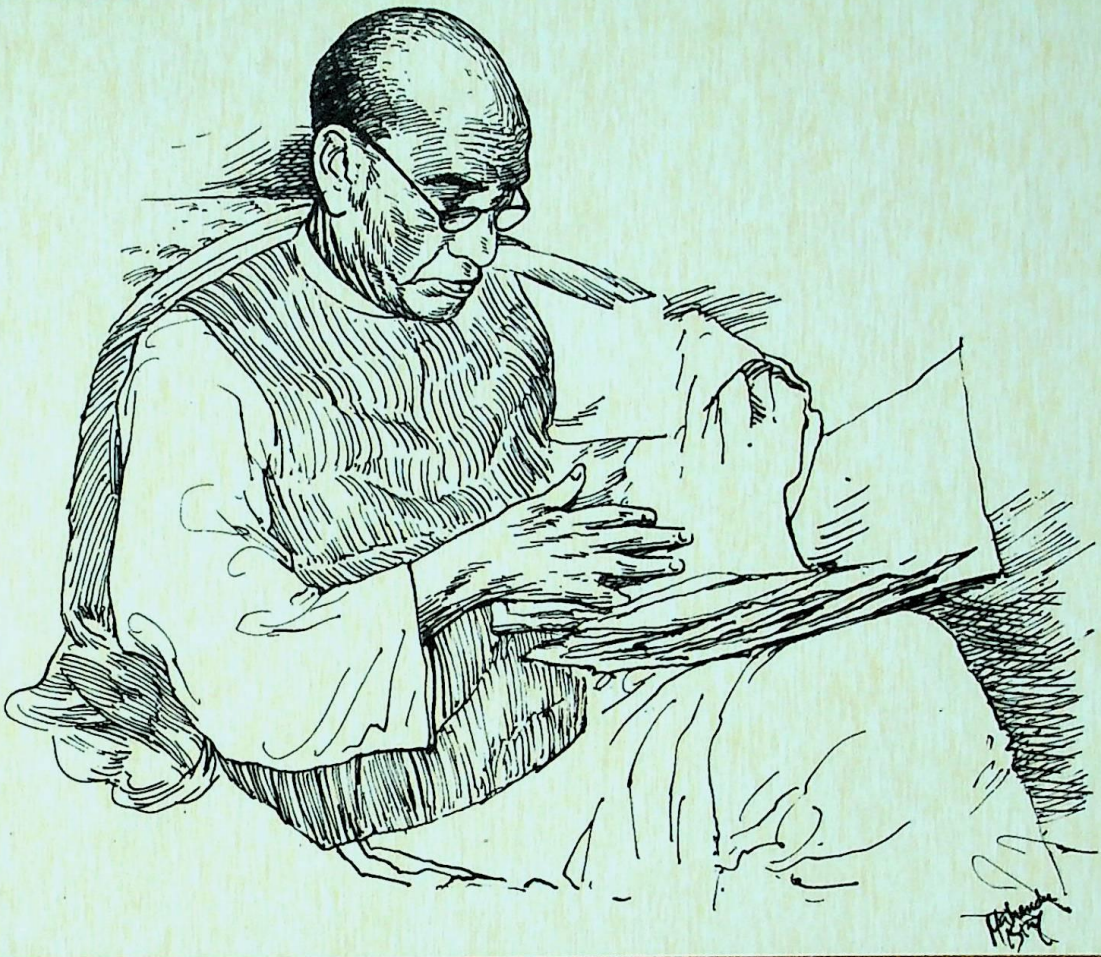
VOLUME 6

- *Patel–Nehru Differences*
- *Assassination of Gandhi*
- *Services Reorganised*
- *Refugee Rehabilitation*



SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE

• 1945 – 1950 •

EDITED BY **DURGA DAS**

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Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru came to the brink of relinquishing office in each other's favour over differences, first, arising out of communal disturbances in Ajmer-Merwara and later snowballing into serious conflict over the definition of the functions of the Prime Minister in relation to his colleagues, and the preparation of memoranda by both for presentation to Gandhi for his adjudication. The assassination of Gandhi at this crucial period acted, however, as a cementing bond between them. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and similar organisations were banned.

C. Rajagopalachari was brought to the Centre as the Governor-General in succession to Mountbatten. Restoring popular confidence after the Gandhi murder and curbing the extremist elements responsible for it without at the same time causing civil strife was the responsibility of Patel. The correspondence between Nehru and Patel on this subject reveals their different styles of functioning. Throughout the year, the influx of fresh waves of refugees and their rehabilitation continued to be a major preoccupation of the Government, and it was Patel's lot to co-ordinate these tasks.

The difficulties encountered in providing cohesive and effective administrations in the provinces called for firm directives from Patel. In the United Provinces, the major conflict was between the veteran Congress leader Purushottamdas Tandon and Premier Pant and their political adversary Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. This was represented in the Press as a struggle between the supporters of Patel and Nehru and a reflection of a power tussle at a higher level. Sharp differences arose in Assam between Governor Akbar Hydari and Chief Minister Gopinath Bardoloi, while Communist activities became a cause of worry in this province and in neighbouring West Bengal.

Of enormous interest is the way Patel, while acting for Nehru when the Prime Minister went abroad, wrote the fortnightly letters Nehru used to send to Premiers of States. These show a masterly grasp not only of matters of national interest but also of world affairs.

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THEIR EXCELLENCIES EARL MOUNTBATTEN AND COUNTESS MOUNTBATTEN VISITED DEHRA DUN ON 13 JUNE 1948 TO BID FAREWELL TO SARDAR PATEL AND MANIBEN PATEL. NEHRU APPEARS IN THE BACKGROUND

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SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE
1945-50

VOLUME VI

PATEL-NEHRU DIFFERENCES—ASSASSINATION OF GANDHI—
SERVICES REORGANISED—REFUGEE REHABILITATION

EDITED BY
DURGA DAS
Editor-in-Chief, India News & Feature Alliance
Formerly Chief Editor, Hindustan Times, New Delhi
Author of 'India—From Curzon to Nehru and After'

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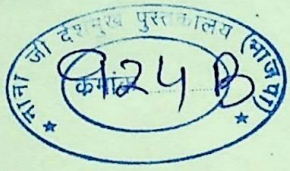
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Principal Collaborators:

SHANKAR PRASADA, ICS (retd.)
Special Secretary, Kashmir Affairs (1958-65)
Chief Commissioner of Delhi (1948-54)

B. L. SHARMA
Former Principal Information Officer, Government of India
Former Special Officer on Kashmir Affairs in the External Affairs Ministry, New Delhi, and author

INDER JIT
Director-Editor, India News and Feature Alliance and
Editor, The States, New Delhi

TREVOR DRIEBERG
Political Commentator and Feature Writer
Former News Editor, The Indian Express, New Delhi

UGGAR SAIN
Former News Editor and Assistant Editor,
The Hindustan Times, New Delhi

Printed and Published by Shantilal Harjivan Shah
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Patel being received at Cuttack airport. On his right is K. N. Katju, Governor of Orissa, and on his left Harekrushna Mahtab, Premier 320

Bombay Premier B. G. Kher gave a reception to the Acting PM, Sardar Patel, on the occasion of his 74th birthday, on 31 October, 1948, on the lawns of Council Hall, Bombay. To the Sardar's right are B. G. Kher, Kunwar Maharaj Singh, Governor, and Jivraj Mehta, Finance Minister 321

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The Sardar hosting at a reception to Central India Princes on 20 April, 1948, is seen talking to US Ambassador Henry Grady, while Netherlands Ambassador Lamping and Chief Justice Kania listen to the conversation 433

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FOREWORD

The correspondence of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in ten volumes, covers a crucial period in India's history: 1 October 1945 to 13 December 1950, two days before his death in Bombay.

The letters and annexures consist of exchanges between Sardar Patel on the one hand and Lord Wavell, Lord Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, rulers of Princely States, Premiers of Congress Ministries and scores of Congressmen belonging to the party rank and file, on the other. These relate to various matters which arose in the domestic, international, constitutional, administrative and economic spheres in this period and thus constitute valuable source material of history. They were in the custody of Miss Maniben Patel, the Sardar's daughter, and were deposited by her with the Navajivan Trust in Ahmedabad after his death.

The Trust arranged, under her direction and supervision, to have them typed in Ahmedabad and send the copies to me for editing and compilation. The volumes are thus based on authentic copies of the correspondence deposited with the Trust.

Explaining the time-lag in releasing the correspondence, Maniben said in a long talk she had with me in New Delhi in late 1970 that she had held it back until she was certain that its publication would not be harmful to the nation for which her father had laboured and suffered so much. The letters contain matter relating to affairs of State and party organisation whose untimely disclosure might have embarrassed the Government or the political leaders of the day.

Since, however, some of the correspondence in the possession of other parties and relating to isolated events had been made public, she decided that the time had come to release the correspondence to give a balanced picture of the events to which they relate or of the Sardar's views. "I have been late," she said, "but not too late."

The Navajivan Trust, she added, had agreed to publish the correspondence and thus made it possible for the people of India and the world outside to have access to this valuable material which throws new light on the momentous developments

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of the period covered by these papers and the calculations made by the leading personalities of the day in shaping the course of history.

The significance of the correspondence lies in the light it sheds on the main characters on the Indian stage as they acted and reacted to the challenges of the time and to the problems posed by their differing approach and outlook. There is indeed hardly a national or regional issue of consequence in contemporary history the origin of which cannot be traced to the five crucial years.

Vallabhbhai Patel emerges from the correspondence as a great organiser and consolidator of modern India. Over 70 when he assumed ministerial office for the first time, he carried on his ailing shoulders the crushing burden of building the political infrastructure of the new India. Death prevented him from completing his task, but what he achieved in five short years endures.

These volumes are the bones and sinews of Indian history of a crucial period. To the scholar and researcher, they offer a treasure of source material. To politicians, businessmen and administrators, they should serve as a guide. To the citizen, they provide inspiration.

Arrangements are in chronological order and not by topic. But the letters have been grouped thematically to retain interrelation of events and negotiations. Correspondence of a routine nature has been omitted and a few excisions have been made out of regard for the susceptibilities of the persons concerned. Such excisions are indicated by dots.

Where an extract or extracts from a letter are published, this is indicated by the word 'Extracts' at the top of the letter. The omissions have been effected by the persons entrusted by Maniben Patel and the Navajivan Trust with selecting the material for publication.

In several instances, letters, enclosures and other documents referred to in the published correspondence are not to be found in these volumes. It is hoped that future researchers will be able to fill these gaps.

The yardstick which the Sardar applied to public life and to political and socio-economic issues was forgotten or ignored by his successors with consequences which became apparent in the confused state of politics in the 1960s. India has again entered the most crucial period in the evolution of its polity. The stand taken by the Sardar on various issues and his vision of the road which India should take have acquired a new relevance.

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Each volume of the series contains an outline of the contents of the other nine volumes in the form of a summary of the main features. This should help researchers ascertain at a glance what the whole series contains. The details of arrangements for selection and presentation of the correspondence were explained in the Foreword to the first volume, and are not therefore recapitulated here. The feature "Focus on Sardar" giving the views of Maniben Patel and the "Chronology of Principal Events in Sardar's Life" given in Volume I are being reproduced in succeeding volumes.

We owe a word of gratitude to the Sardar's daughter, Kumari Maniben Patel. After the Sardar's death, she preserved these papers with great care and readily agreed to their publication. Not only this, she had a hand in the meticulous scrutiny and compilation of these papers. By her efforts the authenticity of these records has been vouchsafed and the Navajivan Trust has been able to publish them with a sense of redeeming a part of its debt to the Sardar.

Since, in the line of duty I witnessed, chronicled, and even participated in many of the events of this stirring period, I was approached by the Trustees to undertake the arduous task of editing the voluminous correspondence. My colleagues have helped to process this vast accumulation of material with professional skill, arrange it thematically and make it meaningful to the average reader. For me and them it has been a labour of love. We also thank our aides and the staff of the Navajivan Trust for their assistance in bringing this massive undertaking to a successful close.

2, Tolstoy Lane
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15 December 1972

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CHRONOLOGY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN SARDAR'S LIFE

1875 Born on 31 October at Nadiad, Kaira district, Gujarat. Fourth son of Jhaverbhai Patel, a farmer of Karamsad in the same district, and Ladbai. Belonged to agricultural caste known as Leuva Patidar. Schooling up to English third standard at Karamsad.

1891 English 4th and 5th standards at Petlad, a small town seven miles from Karamsad. Lived in a rented room with four or five other boys, with seven days' ration. Walked from Karamsad to Petlad every week.

1893 At the age of 18 married Jhaverba of Gana, a small village three miles from Karamsad.

1897 Matriculated from a high school in Nadiad, Kaira district, at 22.

1900 Passed District Pleaders' Examination. Studied with books borrowed from friends. Set up independent practice at Godhra, headquarters of Panchmahals district, Gujarat. Contracted bubonic plague from a court nazir whom he nursed when an epidemic broke out in Godhra.

1902 Shifted practice to Borsad, where he quickly made a name as a criminal lawyer.

1905 Saved enough money to go to England to become a barrister, but postponed departure in deference to the wishes of his elder brother Vithalbhai, who came to know about his plan and wished to go first. Looked after his brother's wife while he was away.

1909 Wife Jhaverba died after an operation in Bombay. Received a telegram containing news of her death while arguing a murder case in Borsad, but continued case until hearing was completed. In spite of pressure from friends and relations, refused to marry again.

1910 Left for England. Admitted to Middle Temple.

1911 Passed preliminary examination with honours, standing first in Equity. Fell ill with a tropical disease unknown in England. Doctors wanted to amputate his leg, but a German

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doctor intervened and cured him through an operation which he underwent without chloroform.

1912 Took final examination after sixth term instead of usual 12. Stood first in first class, winning a prize of £50 and exemption from two terms. Sailed for India the day after convocation.

1913 Reached Bombay on 13 February. Refused post in Judicial Department as a lecturer in Government Law School, Bombay, and left for Ahmedabad, where he established himself as foremost criminal lawyer.

1915 Member, Gujarat Sabha, which was converted into Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee in 1919.

1917 Elected member of Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Election challenged and set aside. Stood in a by-election and was returned unopposed. Mahatma Gandhi, president of the first Gujarat Provincial Conference, appointed an executive committee with Patel as secretary. Impressed by Gandhi's leadership of the agitation against the British indigo planters of Champaran, Bihar.

Conducted agitation against begar (forced labour for Government purposes). Led agitation against the appointment of a British member of the Indian Civil Service as Municipal Commissioner and secured his removal.

As Chairman of the Sanitary and Public Works Committee of Ahmedabad Municipality, stayed on in city when most of the citizens went away during an epidemic of plague. Took a leading role in helping sufferers and enforcing precautionary measures.

1918 Organised famine relief works in Ahmedabad district. Represented textile mill labour with Gandhi and Shankarlal Banker before a tribunal appointed to hear a dispute between labour and millowners.

Put up a temporary hospital in city with grant from Municipal Board to Gujarat Sabha to combat severe influenza epidemic. Organised no-tax campaign in Kaira district along with Gandhi. During campaign Gandhi said he was testing Patel, adding later that Patel had turned out to be "pure gold."

Helped Gandhi in recruitment drive for British Indian Army. They used to walk together for miles and cooked their own food.

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1919 Chairman, Managing Committee, Ahmedabad Municipal Board.

Organised movement against Rowlatt Bills designed to strangle movement for self-rule. Led big demonstration march in Ahmedabad on 6 April and addressed public meeting against bills. Sold publicly Gandhi's proscribed books Hind Swaraj and Sarvodaya, and published Satyagraha Patrika in Gujarati without official declaration or permission. Government took no action.

Helped local authorities restore peace and order after large-scale disturbances leading to martial law in Ahmedabad after arrest of Gandhi.

Served with a show-cause notice for cancellation of his sanad (permit to practise law) for participating in a public meeting advocating satyagraha. Case ended with a warning. Refused to pay fine imposed by Government as penalty for riots in city. Sofa attached and auctioned for Rs. 100.

1920 Organised campaign of Congress Party in elections to Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Congress captured almost all elected seats. Discarded Western dress and adopted khadi dhoti, kurta and chappals. Burnt all his foreign clothes. Way of life also changed to traditional pattern in Gujarat. Organised a conference of political workers of Gujarat in Ahmedabad and persuaded it to adopt a resolution supporting Gandhi's civil disobedience movement.

In response to Gandhi's call at Nagpur session of Congress to collect money for Tilak Swaraj Fund, promised to raise Rs. 1 million and enrol 300,000 party members in Gujarat. Fulfilled these promises within three months.

1921 Elected chairman of Reception Committee of 36th session of Congress held at Ahmedabad. For first time, delegates sat on floor and the session set new pattern in simplicity, austerity and businesslike proceedings.

Built a hospital and maternity home on 21 acres of land along Sabarmati river at site of session. The fountain built at that time is still there.

1922 Government of Bombay suspended Ahmedabad Municipality after a sharp tussle over supervision of municipal

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schools. Organised schools under People's Primary Education Board with public contributions. Municipality suspended. Collected Rs. 1 million for Gujarat Vidyapith in a tour which took him up to Rangoon.

1923 All-India Congress Committee deputed him to conduct satyagraha at Nagpur in connection with British District Commissioner's ban on flying national flag in cantonment area. Resisted Bombay Government's levy of punitive tax on people of Borsad who were charged with harbouring criminals. Tax withdrawn. Called Suba of Borsad.

1924 Ahmedabad Municipality reinstated. Fresh elections gave Congress Party a decisive majority in enlarged Municipal Council. Elected President of municipality.

1927 Passed a resolution giving notice to Ahmedabad Cantonment to pay water tax from 1920 at rate of eight annas. If tax was not paid, threatened to cut off water connection. Tax paid under protest.

Introduced khadi uniform in municipality. Municipal work was conducted in Gujarati after he became President. His scheme for supplying pure water passed.

Completed drainage scheme during term as President. Collected all arrears of municipal tax not paid by high officials, some well-to-do people and municipal councillors by cutting water connections and attaching properties.

Unprecedented rainfall caused great damage and hardship throughout Gujarat. Saved Ahmedabad from floods by getting culverts breached. Organised relief measures for flood sufferers with public contributions. Promoted grow-more food and fodder campaigns and opened shops to sell high-quality gram, cereal and cotton seed for sowing at low cost to farmers. Received more than Rs. 10 million from Government earmarked for famine relief. A new party emerged in Ahmedabad Municipality. Clashed with it over appointment of chief officer.

1928 Resigned presidency. Led peasant agitation in Bardoli taluka, Surat district, against increase in land revenue rates. Bombay Government punished farmers for non-payment by confiscating and auctioning land, crops and other property.

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As agitation continued unabated, Government agreed to restore all unsold confiscated land, release satyagrahis, reinstate dismissed village officers and reduce land tax. Named Sardar of Bardoli and thereafter known as Sardar Patel. Presided over first local self-government conference in Surat.

1929 Presided over Maharashtra Political Conference in Poona. Toured Maharashtra, mobilising public opinion against enhanced land taxes and untouchability.

Presided over Kathiawar Political Conference at Morvi.

Toured Madras Presidency at request of C. Rajagopalachari. Presided over Tamil Nadu Political Conference at Vedaranyam. Reiterated support for Congress resolution on dominion status at conference against supporters of complete independence. Also visited Karnatak and Bihar.

At Calcutta session of Congress advocated support to all-party committee headed by Motilal Nehru which recommended acceptance of dominion status as India's political goal, provided demand was granted within two years. Motilal Nehru, Congress President, moved a resolution from chair congratulating Patel and peasants of Bardoli on victory over British bureaucracy. Nominated in September as a candidate for presidency of Congress session at Lahore but withdrew in favour of Jawaharlal Nehru.

1930 Arrested on 7 March while addressing a public meeting at Ras village, near Borsad, a few days after Gandhi announced march to Dandi near Surat, to break salt law. Preceded marchers to arrange accommodation and food on way. Sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500 or three weeks' additional imprisonment. Refused to pay fine and lodged in Sabarmati jail, Ahmedabad.

Went on hunger-strike in jail, requesting C class diet instead of A class. Request granted. Released on 26 June.

Arrested when leading a procession in Bombay on 31 July and sentenced to three months' jail. Taken to Yeravda jail near Poona. On release, made a speech at Khadi Bhandar, for which he was arrested. Sentenced to nine months' imprisonment in the second week of December.

1931 Released from jail in March under Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Presided over 46th Congress session at Karachi in last

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week of March. Helped Gandhi in his discussions with Viceroy (Lord Irwin) in Simla in last week of August on Congress participation in First Round Table Conference in London.

1932 Arrested at 4 a.m. on 4 January and taken by car to Yeravda and imprisoned with Gandhi there for 16 months. Mother died at Karamsad.

1933 Transferred to Nasik jail on 1 August. Elder brother Vithalbhai died in Switzerland on 22 October. Rejected terms on which Government offered to release him on parole for two days to perform funeral rites.

1934 Developed serious nasal trouble in jail and released on 14 July. Issued statement accepting Gandhi's decision to leave Congress on 24 September. Congress decided at its annual session in Bombay in October to contest elections to Central Legislative Assembly. Undertook tour of many parts of country campaigning for party candidates. British Government allowed Jinnah to go to North-West Frontier. Sardar also sought and obtained permission to do so. But after going there was not allowed to visit Bannu district.

1935 Organised relief work in Borsad taluka where plague had broken out in four successive summers. Organised relief for victims of Quetta earthquake from Bombay, where he was laid low with jaundice.

Sir Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay, invited Sardar to a meeting and offered him premiership of Bombay Presidency, but added that land confiscated from farmers in Bardoli and sold would not be returned to owners. Sardar replied: "I am not going to be premier and the land will be returned to the peasants."

President of Third Local Self-Government Conference at Broach.

1936 Collected Rs. 49,000 for Harijan Fund in two days in February. Appointed Chairman of Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee to select party candidates for provincial elections under Government of India Act 1935.

1937 Involved in a controversy with K. F. Nariman, President of Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, over selection of premier for Bombay Presidency. Guided Congress Ministries after acceptance of office.

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1938 Involved in July in controversy on a constitutional issue with Dr. N. B. Khare, Prime Minister of Central Provinces. Khare accused Sardar of conspiring to oust him from office and resigned from Government and Congress. Efforts to impose central party discipline on provincial leaders earned him title Dictator of India. Presided over Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad. Narrowly escaped attempt to kill him. Visit to Mysore city resulted in Government of Mysore State agreeing to flying of Congress flag in its territory. Flew to Rajkot on 24 December for talks with Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, who signed agreement on release of prisoners in Rajkot State and offered Sardar a portfolio in his Council of Ministers.

1939 Subhas Chandra Bose defied Gandhi, Patel and other members of Working Committee and got elected President of Congress at Tripuri session uncontested because Maulana Azad withdrew at last moment.

Thakore Saheb of Rajkot broke agreement and satyagraha was renewed in State early in the year.

Bose's resolution on mass civil disobedience defeated at Tripuri session in February. Bose described Sardar as "shining light of the ruling clique" and resigned presidency.

Working Committee appointed a war sub-committee of three, including Vallabhbhai, in August. Warned provincial Congress organisations not to force a political crisis by hasty action.

1940 Replied in a public speech at Ahmedabad in October to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for the Dominions, who had asked in House of Commons whether India was fit for independence. Sardar said: "If you lose the war, you will have lost everything, and even if you win, you will have suffered so heavily that your victory will be an empty one. At the end of the war, I declare no nation will remain subject to another. A great revolution is going to sweep the people everywhere. We shall see a new world emerge out of the fiery ordeal of this war."

Arrested under Defence of India Act on 18 November for participating in satyagraha launched by Gandhi to press Britain for firm commitment on Indian independence. Imprisoned in Sabarmati jail and later transferred to Yeravda.

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1941 Released on 20 August from detention on ground of health. Condemned communal killing in Ahmedabad at first public meeting after release. Treated for acute intestinal disorder.

1942 Participated in talks with Sir Stafford Cripps in New Delhi. Favoured acceptance of constitutional proposals put forward by Cripps provided they were modified to suit political conditions in India.

1942 August Supported Quit India resolution at AICC meeting in Bombay on 8 August. Arrested at 4 a.m. on 9 August under Defence of India Act. Detained without trial at Ahmednagar fort with other Working Committee members.

1945 Transferred to Yeravda. Recurrence of intestinal trouble. Released on 15 June.

Went to Simla during political talks between Viceroy (Lord Wavell) and Indian leaders.

Entrusted with organising Congress election campaign for Central and provincial legislatures.

Secured G. V. Mavalankar's election as Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly in December.

1946 Issued call to Ministers in Congress Governments to work for eradication of untouchability.

Disapproved Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's proposal for mass conversion of members of Scheduled Castes to other religions. If they changed religion, they could not claim benefits as Harijans.

Persuaded revolting men of Royal Indian Navy to call off agitation in February as "the dawn of freedom is breaking and the sun will rise in a few months."

If political issues between Britain and India could not be solved satisfactorily, India would withdraw from Bretton Woods Conference, Sardar said in statement in March. Condemned suggestion that sterling balances should be scaled down. "Sterling credit is the economic foundation of India and this country's future progress largely depends upon it."

Opposed Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, saying: "It is a monstrous thing that a man can claim a different nationality because he changes his religion." Hindus and Muslims were all basically Indians and thought as such. Congress

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could not accept the theory of Pakistan, happen what may. The two-nation theory would ruin all.

Declared in an exclusive interview with the political correspondent of Reuter that India would be prepared to refer major political issues to an international body for arbitration. Britain could not stay in India indefinitely. "Hand over power either to the Congress or to the Muslim League and go out of India," he said.

Advised withdrawal of trial of leaders of Indian National Army in Delhi.

Pleaded for fuller freedom to legislatures in Princely States and to Praja Mandals to select representatives to Constituent Assembly.

Appealed to Sikhs not to boycott Constituent Assembly even though Cabinet Mission had not done them justice.

Rejected possibility of a coalition between Muslim League and Congress.

Joined Viceroy's Executive Council as Home Member on 3 September. Announced in Central Legislative Assembly that foreigners would be appointed to senior administrative posts only in exceptional cases.

Accepted the principle of state control of industry; told Central Legislative Assembly that it was not desirable to go fast on nationalisation.

Spurned Jinnah's proposal for an exchange of population. Urged Muslim League to join Constituent Assembly and abandon its Pakistan policy.

1947 Talks with British Government representatives on transfer of control of services from Secretary of State to Interim Government and compensation for British officials completed. Statement on All India Radio's language policy announcing changes in existing practice.

Rejoinder to Jinnah: "Let an impartial tribunal decide the Pakistan issue, for Pakistan could be attained only on the basis of justice and understanding and not by force of arms."

Appealed to Muslim League to accept invitation to join talks and agree to arbitration by a "free power" in case of disagreement between League and Congress.

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Told Princes to play their part in shaping India's destiny. Warned North-West Frontier Province Ministry headed by Khan Abdul Qayum Khan that Centre would not submit to rowdyism and threats.

Interim Government's proposals on compensation to British officials accepted by Attlee Government. Demanded dominion status for India "at once" so that a strong Centre could deal firmly with threats to law and order. Statement issued on outbreak of riots in Dera Ismail Khan and elsewhere in NWFP.

Rulers of Dholpur, Nabha and Nawanagar told Sardar in New Delhi of their decision to join Constituent Assembly. States Department created and entrusted to Sardar. Described Jinnah's demand for a land corridor linking West Pakistan with the eastern wing as "fantastic nonsense."

Assured Princes that "internal autonomy" of their states would be respected.

Patel Committee's report on minorities submitted to Constituent Assembly. Report recommended joint electorates, representation in Ministries at Centre and in states and other safeguards.

Insisted on stationing a brigade of Indian Army in Kathiawar to protect states acceding to Indian Union from apprehended attack from Junagadh.

Persuaded Government to overrule Mountbatten and entrust Indian Army with operations against Nawab of Junagadh.

Pledged Government protection to Muslims staying in India. Said forced conversions and marriages would not be recognised.

Announced full agreement between India and Pakistan on all outstanding issues relating to partition, including division of armed forces. Said Kashmir had not been referred to Inter-Dominion Partition Committee. Announced in Constituent Assembly financial settlement between India and Pakistan under which India would transfer Rs. 750 millions to Pakistan as "a great gesture of goodwill."

Addressed Orissa rulers in Cuttack. They agreed to merge their territories with Orissa province.

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Announced at public meeting in Jammu that "everything possible" would be done to save Kashmir, "and this assurance I am conveying on behalf of the Government of India." Praised Sheikh Abdullah's role in ensuring Kashmir's accession to India.

1948 Appealed to labour leaders of West Bengal to support popular Government. Warned Pakistan that if it wanted further division of the country, "let us do it in the open field." Asked Indian Muslims: "In the recent all-India Muslim Conference, why did you not open your mouths on the Kashmir issue? Why did you not condemn the action of Pakistan? These things create doubts in the minds of the people."

Declared in a statement: "Unless the Kashmir issue is settled, the financial pact between India and Pakistan cannot be implemented. . . . Let there be no mistake that Kashmir belongs to India."

Declared at Patna that abolition of zamindari without compensation would be nothing short of robbery.

Appealed to Nizam of Hyderabad to respect his people's wishes and accede to India.

Inaugurating Rajasthan Union, said that only by coming together could smaller states save themselves from anarchy and confusion.

In message on formation of Vindhya Pradesh, said: "Unification and democratisation would be purposeless if they did not bring about improvement in the lot of the people."

Warned British politicians and Press to halt propaganda against India. Blamed Churchill for India's partition and attendant disasters.

Rejected compromise on Hyderabad. Accession and responsible government were India's minimum demands.

Said in an eve-of-independence speech: "In free India there is no room for divided loyalties."

Informed Parliament that "action would be taken against Hyderabad for breach of the standstill agreement."

Congratulated Defence Services on their remarkable success in the "police action" in Hyderabad.

Indicted UN for mishandling Kashmir issue. "We accepted the UN Commission's cease-fire proposals, but the other

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party did not. We could perform the Kashmir operation without danger if only we could free ourselves from our commitments."

Referring to Pakistan and its anti-Indian propaganda, said: "I wonder whether they are really afraid of us, or is this outburst merely an attempt to preserve their unity?"

Inaugurated Advisory Board of Central India States. Praised Nehru's leadership on his 60th birthday, saying: "Pandit Nehru has led the country through the crisis and has by his great leadership enhanced the prestige of India. We want our leader to remain at the helm for many years."

1949 Announced merger of five Princely States of Rajputana—Bikaner, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur—to form Rajasthan Union and hailed it as a momentous development.

Advised Maharaja of Baroda to merge his State with Bombay.

Challenged contention of Nawab of Bhopal that paramountcy had lapsed with British withdrawal from India.

Warned Communists that if they continued to oppose Government and create danger they would be dealt with severely.

Opposed demand for linguistic states because consolidation of country must precede revision of boundaries.

Appealed to members of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh to join Congress.

Advised South Indians to learn Hindi.

Appealed for public contributions to rebuild Somnath temple in Junagadh.

Announced in Hyderabad that responsible government would be introduced in former Nizam's State only after normalcy was restored.

Warned Master Tara Singh in a speech at Amritsar that he was following suicidal policies.

Advised RSS to concentrate on regenerating Hindu society through constitutional and constructive methods.

Inaugurated Rajasthan State in Jaipur.

Announced take-over of administration of Bhopal State by Centre and congratulated Nawab on his understanding

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and self-sacrifice. Declared that welfare of Muslims would be prime concern of State's new administration.

At a public meeting at Indore, warned Congress politicians in newly formed states unions that he would dissolve ministries and administer unions centrally if they did not stop their petty squabbles and tussles for power.

Told All-India Depressed Classes Leagues Confederation: "India's independence will not be completed until every Harijan claims, and actually gets, equality of status."

Moving consideration of report of Advisory Committee on Minorities in Constituent Assembly, said: "Minority concessions, though not good in themselves, have to be treated as purely temporary. Minorities should voluntarily agree to abolition of reservations for them in services and legislatures."

Supported grant of privy purses to princes in return for accession to Indian Union.

1950 Warned Pakistan against pushing Hindus out of eastern wing.

Defended in Parliament use of preventive detention to fight terrorism and violence.

Gave details of democratic set-up for Delhi Union Territory.

Appealed at public meeting in Calcutta for fair trial to Nehru-Liaquat Pact on minorities.

Told public meeting at Indore that Congress "is fully behind Nehru." Called for revolution in system of education in address to Gujarat Vidyapith.

Opened newly constructed building of Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad. Purse of Rs. 1.5 million presented on behalf of Gujarat on his 75th birthday, which he immediately handed over to President of the Provincial Congress Committee.

Declared that accepting aid from United States did not mean alignment with any power bloc. UNO should be strengthened.

Deplored Chinese intervention in Tibet and use of force against Tibetans.

Fell ill on 15 November. Taken to Bombay on Tuesday 12 December. Died on Friday morning, 15 December.

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FOCUS ON SARDAR

[An illuminating picture of Sardar Patel's activities and style of work was provided by his daughter Maniben. What follows are extracts from the information and views given by her to Trevor Drieberg and the Editor in New Delhi.]

The Sardar was a man of few words. He wrote very little; he hardly kept any record of his public or party work. He destroyed letters addressed to him after reading them and replied by hand, not keeping copies. But after he was appointed Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Board in 1934, files relating to its transactions were kept.

When the Sardar fell ill towards the end of the Bardoli satyagraha in 1928, it was suggested that somebody should give him secretarial help. I said: "If someone is to be kept, why not I?" From 1929 until his death, I preserved his correspondence whenever possible. Once, when K. Gopalaswami, political commentator of the Times of India, visited him in his flat on Marine Drive, Bombay, the Sardar called for a letter he had received from C. Rajagopalachari, forgetting that he had torn it up and thrown it in the wastepaper basket. Fortunately, I had collected the pieces. It took me some time to paste them together before passing it on to him. This happened before the Interim Government was formed.

The Sardar travelled second-class by railway before he became a Minister. I would spread his bedding at night and retire to a third-class compartment. But from 1934, when there was much correspondence to attend to even on train journeys and people came to see him at stations, I kept company with him in his second-class compartment. I used to make copies of important letters he wrote in hand, but he would question this, asking why I was taking such trouble and wasting time. I also kept newspaper clippings of important events with which he was associated.

The Sardar read several newspapers and listened to radio news bulletins regularly. This enabled him to keep abreast of developments throughout the country. He also talked to people to get information to supplement other sources.

After 1945, the secretarial functions of the Congress Parliamentary Board were undertaken mainly by Shantilal Shah. The Sardar was undergoing treatment for intestinal trouble at the

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Nature Cure Clinic, Poona, when he sent for Shantilal Shah from Bombay. Shah, a Congress Socialist, hesitated at first because he did not know what was in store for him. But B. G. Kher (Premier of Bombay) advised him to take up the work. The Sardar told Shah he wanted him to act as his secretary at the Parliamentary Board office located at the headquarters of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee.

The Sardar was a very shrewd judge of character. When he met a person for the first time he looked him up and down, and the assessment he made in that process rarely went wrong.

Once when Mathuradas Trikamji, Mayor of Bombay, asked what kind of men he kept round him, the Sardar replied that his was a "juggler's basket." He kept all kinds of people for the single aim of winning India's freedom. He used different people for different purposes. He was fully aware of their weaknesses and drawbacks but exploited their useful qualities.

The Sardar learnt punctuality in his youth when he had to do everything for himself. This experience taught him to save time by doing things according to schedule. This gave him self-reliance and at the same time an appreciation of the difficulties other people encountered. He walked on business errands rather than use transport. This habit served him well in London when he was attending the Inns of Court. He used to walk from his lodgings to the law library, a distance of several miles daily. He could not afford to buy books for study, and was at the library when the librarian opened it and left at closing time every evening.

The visit to England fulfilled two of my father's ambitions. He wanted to see the country from which people had come to conquer India and to qualify as a barrister. He had seen how even mediocre lawyers had been able to build up a large practice because they had been to London to study for the Bar. On his return to Ahmedabad, he established himself as the city's leading criminal lawyer.

When he was a district pleader at Borsad in the early 1900s, there was a British magistrate who kept a mirror in his court to study the faces of witnesses. This made witnesses nervous and the magistrate drew conclusions from their behaviour about their truthfulness. The Sardar thought of a plan to make the officer behave. He demanded transfer to the district court of a case in which he was appearing before the magistrate. The Sardar presented him with a sealed letter. The magistrate opened the letter and saw his name

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heading the list of witnesses for the defence. He called the Sardar to his chamber for a talk. The accused was acquitted and the magistrate stopped using the mirror, conceding that he had no right to do so. This incident illustrates a facet of my father's character. He had no fear of the British magistracy or administrators.

The Sardar was a man of regular habits and disliked armchair politicians. He read about Gandhiji's action in Champaran and was impressed by his methods of organising peasants to resist exploitation and oppression. Mahatma Gandhi was preoccupied with the agitation in Bihar and wanted somebody who would give up everything and devote all his time to the satyagraha campaign in Kaira district organised as a protest against excessive land revenue. My father volunteered his services, and they were accepted.

Until that time the Sardar wore European dress. He was so fastidious that finding no good laundry in Ahmedabad he got his stiff collars washed in Bombay.

From early youth, the Sardar developed the qualities of leadership and discipline. In later life, these qualities were to help him in organising large groups of people for action. Until the Bardoli movement, he was hardly known outside Gujarat. He did not go out of Gujarat until Gandhiji's sentence of imprisonment for six years in 1922, when he went on a fund-raising mission for the Gujarat Vidyapith as far east as Rangoon.

For years in Gujarat, whenever Gandhiji addressed a public meeting the Sardar did not speak at it and later, when the Sardar spoke, other Congress leaders did not speak. This is an illustration of the discipline observed by Congressmen at the time. The leader spoke for them and the others showed their loyalty by action.

When Gandhiji started the swadeshi movement and burning of foreign clothes, the Sardar burnt all his European clothes, socks and hats. He never wore any type of headgear, even a khadi cap, after he cast aside his black Banglori cap. From then, he always wore dhoti and kurta and a chaddar on his shoulder, adding only a warm jacket in winter.

The satyagraha in Borsad Taluka, Kaira district, lasted a month. The provincial Government had levied a punitive tax of eight annas—a large sum at that time—per person on all the inhabitants for the maintenance of the preventive police. Even children were taxed. The campaign succeeded and in this satyagraha he gained the title Suba of Borsad.

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Another sphere in which the Sardar helped to raise the morale of the people of the area was connected with the activities of dacoits. People dared not leave their houses after 6 p.m. for fear of dacoits who infested the area. They appealed to the Sardar for help. He agreed, provided they did not allow their houses to be used for keeping stolen property.

In the Bardoli satyagraha, there was one organiser for every big village. The Sardar set out at noon from his headquarters and returned at midnight after visiting many villages. There was only one car, so all the other organisers journeyed on foot or by train or cart. The peasants accepted the Sardar as their unquestioned leader. Every morning, he received written reports from each village through volunteer messengers. The title Sardar of Bardoli was conferred on him by a party worker at a public meeting. It gained nationwide currency when Gandhiji started referring to him in this manner.

As head of Ahmedabad Municipality, the Sardar looked far ahead of immediate civic needs and planned accordingly, unlike some of his successors who made changes looking to short-term gains.

His qualities of leadership were recognised when he organised relief measures during the floods that hit Gujarat in 1927. He went round Ahmedabad city with the chief engineer and ordered a culvert to be broken to let the flood waters flow into the Sabarmati river. This saved the city from total inundation. He also persuaded the Bombay Government to provide more than a crore of rupees for relief to the flood victims. He sent help to the Collector of Kaira when the district was cut off from the rest of Gujarat. Only the Collector's bungalow, which stood on a mound, was safe, and all the townfolk had gathered there for safety. The Sardar's men brought food and other necessities.

The Sardar went to Calcutta for the Congress session over which Motilal Nehru presided. Even though his name had become a household word as the hero of Bardoli his physical appearance was not known. The volunteers of the Congress failed to identify him and since he did not carry a ticket he was not admitted to the pandal. The next day he carried his membership card and the volunteers were surprised when they found people shouting for the darshan of the Sardar of Bardoli and that the hero was the person the volunteers had kept out the previous day.

The Sardar was favoured by the provincial Congress committees as the next party president, but Motilal Nehru wrote to

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Gandhiji asking that Jawaharlal should succeed him. Motilal wanted to see his son Congress chief before he died. My father agreed with Bapu (Gandhiji) that Motilal's wish be fulfilled.

It was usual for the Congress President to attend annual sessions with large retinues. The Sardar went to the Karachi session in 1931 with only me and an aide, thus cutting drastically the expenses of the reception committee.

The outlook of the Sardar and of Nehru was vastly different. They agreed to differ, but at the same time worked together for the common cause of India's freedom. The influence of Mridula Sarabhai and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai on Nehru was to a large extent responsible for the rift between my father and Jawaharlal.

The Sardar became the party boss from the time he became head of the Parliamentary Board. He was also the party's main fund-raiser. The Congress High Command, of which he was the mainspring, functioned as a moral prop for the Chief Ministers against the administrative machine directed by the British.

I used to sleep by the telephone to take calls that came at odd hours of the night so that the Sardar's sleep was not disturbed. I took down messages and passed them on to him the next morning. One such call came at midnight from Biswanath Das, then Premier of Orissa. He had decided to resign over the choice of a provincial official to act as Governor. The Sardar backed him and the Viceroy yielded.

I may recall a meeting the Sardar had with Bombay Governor Lumley in 1935 at Lumley's request. It lasted about an hour. Lumley told the Sardar that he would be Premier of Bombay, but the lands confiscated from the peasants of Bardoli would never be returned. The Sardar replied: "Note it down that I am not going to be Premier, and also that the lands will be returned to the peasants."

The Sardar took many unpopular decisions in party and Government matters, but his decisions were accepted because he had no axe to grind. He was not amenable to threats or blackmail. He had no property of his own and he was above extraneous considerations. He had nothing to lose, had no ambition and no desire to cling to office.

Once in Yeravda jail, Gandhiji asked in good humour what post he would like to hold after Independence. The Sardar replied he would become a sadhu. In 1945, when it had been decided to replace Azad as Congress President, the Sardar got the largest

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share of votes in the Working Committee. But Kripalani, one of the candidates, withdrew in favour of Nehru and handed a paper to the Sardar to withdraw his nomination as well so that Nehru could be elected unopposed.

Gandhiji, to whom this matter was referred, told Nehru: "I don't want to make you a prop of mine if people don't want you." Nehru kept silent and was selected President. Gandhiji supported Nehru's choice as Prime Minister because he was well known outside India. He compared the Sardar and Nehru to two bullocks yoked to a cart. He felt that if Nehru was made Prime Minister he would be prevented from "making mischief" in the country.

When the Sardar became Home Minister and later on Deputy Prime Minister, anybody could call on him during his morning walk from 4.30 to 6.30. He was a fast walker and few could keep pace with him. They told him what they wanted and then they would drop out when the dialogue was over. He gave brief answers and listened mostly. For party workers and others this was an opportunity for opening their hearts to him. At the end of an hour's listening, the Sardar would probably reply in a couple of words. He arranged assistance for even the humblest party worker who needed it. He provided hospitalisation if necessary. After his illness in March 1948 his medical advisers stopped morning walks completely and restricted his interviews.

In 1941, he was afflicted with severe intestinal trouble. He woke around 3.30 every morning because of pain in the bowels. He spent an hour in the toilet before setting out on his morning walk. He had a cup of tea and breakfast, which consisted of a piece of toast and apple juice. In these early morning hours, before going for a walk, I did my quota of spinning. When he assumed office his Private Secretary V. Shankar came in with office files after breakfast. The Sardar looked through the morning newspapers carefully and rarely missed any significant news. He gave oral instructions to Shankar. As before, he would write as little as possible. When in good health, he left home around 9.30 for the Home Ministry, returned for lunch and after a nap of 15 minutes went to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

I looked after the Sardar's Gujarati correspondence while Shankar attended to that in English. I passed on some of the correspondence in Hindi to Shankar. Morarji Desai had recommended Shankar as Private Secretary. The Sardar invited him to lunch to look him over before selecting him for the post.

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The Partition Committee set up under the Mountbatten Plan and consisting of as many as 30 to 40 officers, would come to the Sardar's house and stay up to lunch receiving instructions from him. Its members had to report back to him in the evening. Every order he issued had to be executed within 24 hours. He rang up Premiers at night when he had a particular issue to discuss with them. He was against wasting money on telephone calls on matters that were not urgent. I kept a diary of all private trunk calls, for which the Sardar paid from his own pocket.

I recall another instance of his method of work. There was a crisis in the jute industry. The Sardar phoned C. C. Desai, Commerce Secretary, and M. P. Birla, Chairman of the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association, Calcutta, and others every night to check on developments. Similarly, at the time of the Bombay riots and disturbances elsewhere, he made phone calls at night to find out what was happening. He made calls to Punjab, Bengal and UP at the time of the partition troubles.

The Sardar was not impolite or arrogant in his dealings with people. He replied promptly to correspondence. He read all the letters addressed to him personally and generally told the officer concerned how he should reply. He never signed letters or any other document blindly. When he was not fully satisfied with a draft, he would change it himself or ask the officer concerned to redraft it. He liked precision and conciseness in letters. He would say that this was "not a place for essays" or for exhibiting one's command of English.

Mountbatten recognised the Sardar's greatness. I was the only other person present when the Sardar had a talk with Bapu between 4 and 5 p.m. on the day of his assassination. Bapu had decided to release the Sardar from the Ministry at the latter's instance, but Mountbatten strongly opposed this because he felt that the Sardar "had his feet on the ground while Nehru had his in the clouds." He told Gandhiji that he could not release the Sardar. Gandhiji agreed and withdrew his decision.

It was agreed at the conversation on January 30 afternoon that Gandhiji, Nehru and the Sardar should sit together and iron out their differences. But this meeting was never held. The Sardar was greatly upset by the slander campaign against him at that time in certain Congress and Government circles. He was worried at heart that Gandhiji had to defend him continually against these slanders.

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Previously, when Nehru lived at York Road and the Sardar just across on Aurangzeb Road, they used to meet every day, even though for a few minutes. Nehru would sometimes drop in after lunch, or in the evening or at night after dinner. They walked together and discussed matters. The Sardar would walk with Nehru up to the gate of the latter's house on York Road and see him off there or they would return together to Aurangzeb Road.

These daily meetings and talks cleared misunderstandings, but this dialogue became very difficult after Nehru moved to the house of the former Commander-in-Chief on Teen Murti Marg. If he had not moved there on Mountbatten's advice, much of their later differences might never have developed. Because of his illness, the Sardar was not able to go to Nehru's house frequently.

When there were party matters to be attended to, the Sardar requested the AICC General Secretary to call at his house for instructions. The Working Committee met at the Sardar's residence since there was no good AICC office building at that time in Delhi. The Provincial Premiers constantly sought his guidance, and he was a great help to them in their encounters with members of the bureaucracy or party dissidents.

The administrations of the new states formed after integration lacked capable men to guide them. But in those areas where party members had carried out constructive work under the Sardar's direction before independence, such men were available. This was so in Kathiawar and Gujarat. Elsewhere in the country, party workers in the former states had only indulged in agitation and there was no solid foundation for their work.

The Sardar did not aspire to prime ministership or any other high office. He once said that if India had won Swaraj ten years earlier he would have solved the food problem as he had solved that of the states. He added: "But I have not the strength to do so now." He considered food the country's most important problem after consolidation. He was essentially a man of action, averse to writing. His philosophy of life may be summed up in the words: "Why not create history rather than waste time writing it?"

MANIBEN PATEL

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HIGHLIGHTS—VOLUMES I-V AND VII-X

Vol. I: New Light on Kashmir

This absorbing inside story of the events leading up to Independence and continuing subsequently till Sardar Patel's death in 1950 has not been told before. It contains the basic raw material for the research scholar and the historian. The correspondence published in this series opens with the efforts of Maharaja Hari Singh and his counsellors in Srinagar to shore up the feudal structure in Jammu and Kashmir by denial of democratic rights.

The Maharaja unleashed a campaign of repression against the National Conference, the political mouthpiece of the state people, arrested Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, its chief, and charged him with sedition. Jawaharlal Nehru entered Kashmir in defiance of the state Government's ban and courted arrest.

The Maharaja, finding that his hands were forced by the invasion of the state from Pakistan by armed "raiders," opted for India and after signing the instrument of accession, agreed to the formation of a popular government under Sheikh Abdullah. The Maharaja and the Sheikh were soon at loggerheads. The Maharaja, under relentless pressure from New Delhi, surrendered power and placed himself in the hands of the Sardar who, as the correspondence reveals, played a crucial role in the negotiations which led ultimately to the withdrawal of the Maharaja from the state and the succession of his heir, Yuvraj Karan Singh, as regent and finally as constitutional head of the state.

Patel also pointed out how India's case on Kashmir before the United Nations Security Council should have been effectively presented. The exchange of letters between him and the Sheikh foreshadows the strong differences on approach to the Kashmir problem which ultimately led to the Sheikh's removal from the prime ministership of the state in 1953. Abdullah went his own way, heedless of Patel's restraining influence.

Vol. II: Elections to Central & Provincial Legislatures—Direction of Congress Campaign

Soon after the Congress leaders were released from detention in 1944, negotiations opened with the representatives of the British Raj in New Delhi and the leaders of other Indian political

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parties, notably the Muslim League, on new constitutional arrangements to suit the change in the political climate brought about by World War II and to satisfy the aspirations of the Indian people for freedom.

Patel's guiding hand was evident in these negotiations as well as in the direction and management of the Congress campaign for the elections to the Central and provincial legislatures under the Government of India Act of 1935. These elections, based on communal electorates with a restricted franchise, were an acid test of the Congress claim to represent the Indian people and to be the recipient of power on their behalf when the British relinquished their authority. The Muslim League, through Mohammed Ali Jinnah, contested this claim, asserting that it was the sole champion of the Muslim "nation" which aspired to a separate existence on the advent of independence.

Patel's role as chief of staff of the Congress High Command, indefatigably marshalling manpower and finances and selection of suitable candidates for the big electoral battle, comes out strikingly in the correspondence in this volume.

Vol. III: Guidance to Ministries—Constituent Assembly Problems—Interim Government Deadlock—Reforms in Indian States

Elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies were followed by the formation of a board consisting of Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel and Dr Rajendra Prasad to organise elections to the Constituent Assembly as proposed under the Cabinet Mission plan, aiding and guiding Provincial Congress Ministries, including the Coalition Ministry in the Punjab, and supervising the working of the Congress party in the Central Assembly. These tasks fell primarily on the shoulders of Sardar Patel, who functioned as a one-man High Command.

The political situation was complicated by several factors. The Governor of Sind, Sir Francis Mudie, manoeuvred to put in the Muslim League in power. Direct Action Day, observed by the Muslim League on 16 August 1946, resulted in unprecedented communal carnage in Calcutta. There were riots in Bihar. The League refused to agree to the Cabinet Mission plan. Mahatma Gandhi's meetings with Lord Wavell failed to straighten matters. Patel attributed the deadlock over the formation of an Interim Coalition Government to bungling by the Viceroy.

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An Interim Government, headed by Nehru and consisting of Congress party nominees, was formed on 2 September 1946. It was enlarged into a Congress-League coalition in the middle of October 1946. Soon after, Patel described the coalition, which was functioning without joint responsibility, as an arena of party politics and intrigue. He repeatedly drew Wavell's attention to the disruptionist role of the League members of the government. He also tried to persuade him to bring Bengal under virtual martial law to restore peace and tranquillity. Problems of Indian National Army personnel, the Royal Indian Navy uprising, creation of the International Monetary Fund, shipping, trade, and the Secretary of State's Services were firmly and constructively handled by the Sardar.

The movement for reform in the Indian States sponsored by Praja Mandals received an impetus from political developments in British India. The meagre hope of success is revealed in a note Nehru forwarded to the Sardar of his talks with the Nawab of Bhopal in early April 1946. The Sardar, however, guided the movement into the right channel. The correspondence reveals the country in the throes of revolutionary change.

Vol. IV: Transfer of Power—Communal Holocaust and Partition—Administration and Stability

The political deadlock dragged on from 1946 to 1947. All efforts of the Congress to avert partition failed as the League, instigated by sympathisers in the top echelons of the British bureaucracy in India and Britain, stuck out for Pakistan. Finally, the Congress capitulated under heavy pressure and the twin states of secular, democratic India and Islamic, autocratic Pakistan were born, with Governor-General Mountbatten playing the role of midwife.

Partition and transfer of power were accompanied by the tragedy and turmoil of wholesale uprooting of populations, mass murder and looting and other acts of barbarity. The entire socio-economic structure of the affected provinces seemed on the verge of collapse. How the problem of restoring peace and sanity and resettling the uprooted and dispossessed victims of the trauma of partition was handled, primarily by Patel, with courage and firmness, is revealed in the correspondence.

While the Attlee Government in London and Mountbatten in New Delhi appeared to play fair by the Congress and the Indian people, British administrators continued to play politics at

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the lower levels and were instrumental in pushing Pakistan into a military adventure in Kashmir as part of their game to weaken India economically and politically. The Muslim League, which had grabbed power in Pakistan, eagerly collaborated in this game.

Vol. V: Control over Congress Ministries—Indian States' Accession

Creating conditions for stable government and maintaining law and order in the old provinces of British India after the disruption of partition was a major problem which was Patel's prime responsibility as Minister of Home Affairs. Relations between governors and chief ministers had to be redefined in the changed political context, and the Sardar was often called upon to mediate in disputes resulting from conflicting interpretations of rules and practices by those in authority.

Problems also arose from the emergence of factionalism in the provincial Congress organisations, and the Sardar had to exert his authority to prevent them from cracking up in the heat of local power struggles. The most notable instance was in Madras, where two rival factions were engaged in a bitter struggle which resulted in the ouster of Chief Minister T. Prakasam.

Rehabilitation of Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Pakistan was the key problem encountered in East Punjab, together with the intransigence of Master Tara Singh and the Akali Dal. In Assam, large-scale infiltration of Muslims created difficulties for the provincial administration in the wake of the loss of Sylhet district to Pakistan. The inclusion of the tribal hill tracts in the province also presented difficulties as the hillsmen, ethnically and culturally different from the dwellers in the Brahmaputra Valley, wanted a separate identity. In the interests of national security in a very sensitive region, they were brought together under one administration.

Bringing the conglomeration of princely states within the ambit of the new integrated nation-state the Congress leaders envisaged after freedom also presented many problems, the solution of which rested on Patel's shoulders as Minister of States.

Vol. VII: Integrating Indian States—Police Action in Hyderabad

The year 1948 was significant for the introduction of responsible government in many princely states, and also for the attempts of some princes to block this process. Integration talks were launched

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and new groupings of states came into existence with popular ministers to run them. Not long after their induction, Patel was called upon to deal with the squabbles within these governments as well as between them and the princely heads of the new unions.

The papers relating to the States of Hyderabad and Junagadh have deen brought together, for their case stands apart from that of the other states which voluntarily merged in the Indian Union as a result of the patriotic impulse of their rulers, who read the signs of the times. While the ruler of Junagadh fled to Pakistan, the Nizam dreamt of carving out an independent state in the belly of the Indian Union.

With this end in view, the Nizam's agents went on an arms buying spree in Europe and organised bands of thugs to terrorise the predominantly Hindu population of his State. Secret negotiations were also started with the British for the addition of Bastar State to his domain and the retrocession of Berar, which had been incorporated in the Central Provinces. Advances were made to the Portuguese Government about providing access to Hyderabad through Goa to the Arabian Sea.

Here, as in other instances of princely opposition to joining India, the undercover manoeuvrings of British officials and politicians, keen on seeing India weak and divided after independence, played an important part in stiffening the resistance of the Nizam and the feudal clique which supported him. After vain attempts to persuade the Nizam to agree peaceably to joining the Indian Union, as the vast majority of his subjects demanded, the Indian Government organised a "police action" to effect the merger. The story ends with the Nizam's surrender and expression of complete confidence in Sardar Patel's political sagacity.

Vol. VIII: Foreign Policy in Evolution—Constitution-making—Political and Administrative Problems

The future of India's relations with the Commonwealth of Nations, ties with Nepal, recognition of Communist China and disputes with Pakistan over canal waters, ill-treatment of minorities in Pakistan and evacuee property were important matters of foreign policy in which the Sardar made a significant contribution. The main task the Sardar undertook was to merge the Unions of Princely States with the adjoining states of the Indian Union, thus creating a bigger territorial unit than existed under the British or any former Raj.

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Internally, differences arose over whether the first President of the Indian Republic should be C. Rajagopalachari or Dr.Rajendra Prasad. Nehru and Patel took different attitudes to mass agitation by the Akalis in East Punjab. The Hindu Code Bill was another issue on which eminent Congress leaders differed from the government's view.

The sentence of death was passed on 12 February on Nathuram Godse, the principal accused in the Gandhi murder case, and Patel overruled pleas for clemency. As Minister of Information and Broadcasting, he laid down a policy on the use of Hindi for the guidance of All India Radio.

Nehru visited the United States. Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister, filled in for him. His confidential fortnightly letter of over 10,000 words to chief ministers of states elaborating his political, economic and administrative philosophy is in the nature of a will and testament.

Vol. IX: Political Controversies—Refugees from East Bengal—Territorial Integration of Princely States

Factionalism continued to cause administrative snarls in the states and provinces and to this were added charges of corruption and abuse of power against those in authority. The Sardar was deeply involved in trying to keep peace among the warring factions and weeding out the corrupt. A controversy erupted in West Bengal over the relative status of Bengali and Hindi for official purposes, and a movement for Greater Bengal, including East Pakistan, raised its head in the province.

Friction within the Madras Ministry was sharpened by popular demands for a separate Andhra Pradesh. Factions within the Punjab Congress came to be identified with Nehru and Patel. In Hyderabad, the Communists as well as communalists became active and caused anxiety to the State administration. The Communist-supported uprising of the peasants of Telengana, who employed force to dispossess the landlords and divide up their property, led to military operations against them.

Communal riots broke out in West Bengal as more refugees streamed in from East Pakistan with stories of atrocities perpetrated on the Hindu minority there. The Congress party split in Andhra Pradesh at the same time as the Communist swung into action in the region. Master Tara Singh strove hard to stir up communal feeling in the Punjab. The Sardar advocated a cautious approach to the language problem in this province.

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The partition of Bengal and the consequent loss of jute so necessary for mills in India was a matter of great concern to the Sardar who wanted the provinces to put more acreage under its cultivation. Food shortage equally worried him and he urged the provinces to open up waste lands and popularise modern and better techniques of agriculture among farmers. On other economic fronts he appealed to labour to shun strikes for the more reasonable procedure of arbitration of disputes. To Rajendra Prasad's objection that the Hindu Code Bill should not be rushed through the legislature, he said the party had debated it and decided "to support" it. He emphasised that even majority party decisions should be accepted and implemented by all members and objectors should quit. He stressed the need for quick action in the cases of suspended government servants.

Vol. X: Acute Power Struggle—Triumph of Mutual Accommodation—Warning against China

The highlight of foreign affairs was the Chinese invasion of Tibet, an event which raised the problem of security along the Himalayan border. In letters to Nehru and CR, the Sardar underscored the potential threats to India's sovereignty from this source. Pakistan's persecution of minorities, incursions into Indian territory and general hostility were other matters of concern to New Delhi. Efforts were even made to poison the good relations between India and Nepal. After the election of Rajendra Prasad as President, Nehru announced his intention of resigning the office of Prime Minister and devote himself to party activities. The Central Cabinet was reconstituted and CR entered it. There were several exchanges of correspondence between Nehru and Patel on matters of principle, including a definition of the powers of a governor. Finance Minister John Matthai resigned on an issue of principle, and this was followed by a bitter war of words.

In the Congress presidential elections, Nehru and Patel ranged on different sides. Nehru opposed Purushottamdas Tandon's nomination, and when Tandon was elected Nehru refused to join the Congress Working Committee. The Sardar's health began to fail.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	All India Congress Committee
BPCC	Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CP	Central Provinces
DIG	Deputy Inspector-General of Police
GG	Governor-General
GIP	Great Indian Peninsula Railway
HE	His Excellency
HM	Honourable Member
IAC	Indian Airlines Corporation
ICS	Indian Civil Service
IGP	Inspector-General of Police
INA	Indian National Army
INTUC	Indian National Trade Union Congress
ITO	Income-tax Officer
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
PCC	Pradesh Congress Committee
PWD	Public Works Department
RAF	Royal Air Force
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SP	Superintendent of Police
UK	United Kingdom
UNO	United Nations Organisation
UP	United Provinces
WITC	West India Turf Club

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GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS

Akali Dal	Principal Sikh political party
Arya Samaj	A sect of reformist Hindus who are against idol worship
Azad	Free
Babu	Term of respect used in Bengal and Bihar for members of the Hindu intelligentsia; commonly used for a clerk in British times
Bande Matram	Salute to Mother—the patriotic national song popular during the freedom movement
Bapu	Affectionate form of address for Gandhi used by followers; means father
Begum	A term of address commonly used for an upper class married Muslim woman
Brahmin (Brahman)	Highest caste among Hindus, originally a priestly caste
Diwan (Dewan)	Minister or Chief Minister in princely states; titles Diwan Sahib and Diwan Bahadur were conferred by the Viceroy on distinguished South Indians
Gita	Hindu religious book
Goondas	Hooligans
Gurdwara	Sikh shrine where the sacred Granth Sahib is read to a congregation
Guru	Spiritual adviser, religious leader; for Gurus in context of Sikhism
Harijan	Literally 'children of God', a term coined by Mahatma Gandhi for untouchables; also title of Gandhi's weekly newspaper
Hartal	Strike; closing of shops and public institutions as a mark of protest
Hindu Mahasabha	Communal organisation whose membership was confined to Hindus
Jamiat-ul-Ulema	Association of Muslim divines with nationalistic leanings
Janmabhumi	Birthplace
Jat	Agricultural caste of north-west India; found in Baluchistan, Sind, Punjab, western United Provinces and Rajasthan

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Ji	A suffix to a name denoting respect
Kisan	Peasant
Kotwali	Police station
Lakh	A hundred thousand
Lala	Title generally applied to Khatris in Punjab who were village bankers, and to leading members of the Bania tribe in Northern India
Lathi	Long stick used by policemen to disperse and control crowds
Mahatma	Great Soul
Marwari	Native of Marwar in Rajasthan; a community mostly engaged in business all over India
Maulana	Title of respect accorded to Muslim judges, heads of religious orders and persons of great learning in Islamic theology
Meos	A farming Muslim community inhabiting Gurgaon district of Haryana State and former princely States of Alwar, Jaipur and Bharatpur
Mohalla	A segment of a town
Panchayat	Court of arbitration (properly of five persons) for settling petty disputes
Pandit	Title applied to those versed in scriptures but used commonly to denote a Brahmin
Panthic Darbar	Body regulating affairs of Sikh institutions
Poojya	Respected
Pranam	Greeting among Hindus
Rajkumar	Prince, son of a Raja or of a princely family
Sahib	Respectful form of address
Satyagraha	Holding on to truth; form of protest initiated by Gandhi and developed into a political weapon; concept of truth achieved through non-violent resistance
Sikh	Disciple; follower of Guru Nanak (1469-1538), the first of the line of 10 Gurus (leaders) who formulated a new faith to reform Hinduism
Srijut	A form of address
Zamindari	The landed estate of a proprietor

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME VI

This volume—the sixth in the series—represents in a sense the core of the correspondence spread over ten volumes. It begins with "a relatively minor matter" which triggered off a rift, marking the climax of the differences in the style of work and approach to national problems of Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru. The clash reached the point where each felt that he should withdraw in the other's favour, and they agreed finally to submit the crisis to their common mentor—Gandhi—for resolution.

The incident related to the dispatch by Nehru of his Principal Private Secretary, H. V. R. Iengar, to study the communal riots which had broken out in Ajmer-Merwara in December 1947, as he himself could not go on account of the death of a nephew. The sharply-worded argument in a series of letters between Nehru and the Sardar took the serious complexion of a debate on the rights and responsibilities of the Prime Minister.

In a letter to the Sardar, Nehru wrote: "It seems that our approaches are different, however much we may respect each other. . . . If I am to continue as Prime Minister, I cannot have my freedom restricted, and I must have a certain liberty of direction. Otherwise, it is better for me to retire. . . ."

The Sardar in reply said: "I have no desire to restrain your liberty of direction in any manner . . . but when it is clear to us that on the fundamental question of our respective spheres of responsibility, authority and action, there is such a vital difference of opinion between us, it would not be in the interest of the cause which we both wish to serve to continue to pull on longer."

On the repercussions of either resigning, Nehru felt that at the present juncture it would "create a sensation both nationally and internationally, and the consequences may not be good. . . . After having given very serious thought to this matter during the last fortnight, I have come to the conclusion that as far as possible we must avoid, at this particular juncture, any parting of the way in Government." Both leaders prepared a note for decision by Gandhi. On Nehru's views on the Prime Minister's powers, the Sardar said in his note to Gandhiji: "That conception, if accepted, would raise the Prime Minister to the position

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of a virtual dictator, for he claims full freedom to act when and how he chooses. This in my opinion is wholly opposed to the democratic and cabinet system of government. . . . The Prime Minister's position, according to my conception, is certainly pre-eminent; he is first among equals. But he has no overriding powers over his colleagues; if he had any, a cabinet and cabinet responsibility would be superfluous."

Regarding Nehru's offer of resignation, the Sardar said: "The Prime Minister has also referred to his preference for leaving office if mutual accommodation cannot be secured. I maintain, however, that if anybody has to go, it should be myself. I have long passed the age of active service. The Prime Minister is the acknowledged leader of the country and is comparatively young; he has established an international position of pre-eminence for himself."

This rift, by a strange combination of circumstances, coincided with the period when Gandhi was undergoing agony over Hindu-Muslim riots precipitated by the country's partition, and the mounting tension between Pakistan and India over Pakistan's behaviour regarding Kashmir and India's stand on the cash balances to be shared between India and Pakistan.

Gandhi undertook an indefinite fast on 13 January 1948, which it was believed was partly in protest against the technically correct stand that Sardar Patel and Finance Minister Shanmukham Chetty had taken in holding back the cash balances to make Pakistan honour its pledges. As the fast advanced, the cash balances were paid. Gandhi's fast ended on 18 January. Twelve days later, an assassin's bullet laid low the Father of the Nation. Gandhi's martyrdom had an electrifying effect on the nation and, in particular, on his chief lieutenants.

Thus the proposed meeting with Gandhi never took place. A few days after Gandhi's passing away, Patel again wrote to Nehru pressing acceptance of his resignation after the outbreak of disturbances and the charge made in some quarters that he had failed to protect Gandhi after the earlier bomb-throwing incident had given enough warning.

In reply Nehru said: "When Bapu was alive, we had hoped to meet him together and discuss various matters that had troubled us somewhat. You will remember our correspondence. In my last letter I had expressed the hope that, in spite of certain differences of opinion and temperament, we should continue to pull together as we had done for so long. This was, I was glad to

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find, Bapu's final opinion also. . . . Anyway, in the crisis that we have to face now after Bapu's death, I think it is my duty and, if I may venture to say, yours also, for us to face it together as friends and colleagues."

Accepting Nehru's views on the need to work unitedly, the Sardar said: "I had the good fortune to have a last talk with him (Gandhi) for over an hour just before his death, and he communicated to me what had passed between you and him as well as his talk with H.E. (Lord Mountbatten). He had also fixed an appointment to meet both of us the next day. His opinion also binds us both, and I can assure you that I am fully resolved to approach my responsibilities and obligations in this spirit."

The disturbances in the wake of Gandhi's assassination caused Nehru and the Sardar to ban the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. The firmness and sagacity with which he handled the delicate situation in the country at that time were typical of the Sardar. In this context he ordered the drafting of legislation "prohibiting drilling, parade, camps and wearing of semi-military uniforms" to implement the decision on banning private armies.

Another offshoot of Gandhi's murder was the public pressure that Birla House, the residence of the industrialist G. D. Birla in New Delhi, where Gandhi fell to the assassin's bullet, should be acquired for the nation. Nehru suggested to Birla the partitioning of the grounds of the house to make the Samadhi (the scene of the assassination) accessible to the public, while the rest remained with him. Birla expressed his reluctance to accept the proposal but agreed to abide by Nehru's decision. Patel opposed the entire approach saying: "Bapu would never have put up with the idea. . . . Personally, I cannot conceive of a more objectionable way of perpetuating Bapu's memory or of bequeathing to the nation and to posterity a reminder of that great tragedy."

In Assam and the adjoining states in North-East India, Pakistan began to sow seeds of discord among the people and tribes living near the border of East Bengal. Reporting on this situation, Governor Akbar Hydari succinctly said: "The basic fact from which most of Assam's troubles along the whole of her western border flow is the desire of Pakistan to harass our people living in these border areas economically and in other ways. They hope in this way (a) to squeeze the Government of Assam into giving them concessions on points of dispute between Assam and East Bengal, and (b) so far as the Khasi States bordering on Sylhet are concerned, to attract them to their side and so

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utilise the mineral resources which East Bengal lacks." He added: "It is part of Pakistan's game to try and keep us constantly on the hop; while keeping vigilant we must not give them the satisfaction of doing so."

A seasoned administrator, the Sardar directed that "Essentially a practical approach is required and both firmness and tact have to be used." About this time Premier Bardoloi, who had differences with the Governor, expressed his wish to resign because of ill-health, but the Sardar advised him to reduce his workload and carry on in the interests of the province.

The situation in West Bengal was really bad. The Sardar was aware of the various currents and cross-currents in the province's politics and he urged Congressmen to close their ranks, admonishing them in no uncertain terms, "It is no use blaming one party or another. Everybody in West Bengal is to blame." He was worried about the exodus of Hindus from East Bengal and Bengali provincialism, for in his view "the future of this country will depend on our finding a speedy solution of these problems."

After a visit to Bihar, where the Ministry and the provincial Congress were at loggerheads, the Sardar drew public attention to it as "it was a most sickening thing," and emphasised the need to restore discipline. To the difficulties of East Punjab, a border province, Patel paid special attention and supported the demand for arms for home guards in view of Pakistan's preparations for war.

A point of constitutional interest again brought out the differences in the views of Nehru and the Sardar. This pertained to the propriety of the Governor presiding over meetings of the East Punjab Cabinet. While Nehru wanted the practice to continue, Patel was against it. The influx of refugees, in whose resettlement Patel had to give a big helping hand, continued unchecked and became more complicated with the return of Muslims who had migrated to West Pakistan. The resettlement of returning Meos in Alwar or Bharatpur would have, in his opinion, caused bitterness and discontent and might have led to a serious breach of peace. He therefore suggested Gurgaon, then a part of East Punjab, as an alternative. He wrote: "The refugee situation, particularly the accommodation problem, is becoming unmanageable. They seem to be giving us no peace, and it appears that we shall have to quicken our pace much more in dealing with the problems of both accommodation and rehabilitation."

Implementation of the Income-Tax Investigation Act resulted in its being abused, and Patel wrote to Nehru that it was

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leading to "most unfortunate consequences for the country" and would cause "uneasiness in business circles, which in our present economic position we must avoid." He wanted a date to be set for withdrawal of cases from the Income-Tax Investigation Commission. It was a decision about withdrawal of some cases by Finance Minister Shanmukham Chetty, which led to Chetty's resignation. The action was hailed as establishing a healthy convention.

C. Rajagopalachari was invited by Nehru and Patel to take over from Lord Mountbatten as the first Indian Governor-General. Patel wrote: "After Bapu's death, it is all the more essential that the remnant of his circle should pull its weight together and the counsel of each should be available to all."

In a similar strain Patel congratulated General K. M. Cariappa on his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, observing that "for the first time the Indian Army will have the pride and satisfaction of having an Indian at the head of its command, and I am sure you will obtain the fullest loyalty and support from all the officers and ranks under you."

Patel and Nehru took each other's counsel on the selection of G. V. Mavalankar to succeed Rajendra Prasad as Chairman of the Constituent Assembly (functioning as Parliament) and also a successor to Prasad as Congress President. In the controversy over the latter appointment Mohanlal Gautam, according to R. A. Kidwai, let it be known that the Sardar was supporting Purushottamdas Tandon to strengthen his hands on communal issues, and that the election was being fought between the candidates of Nehru and the Sardar. Both leaders repudiated these insinuations.

Of enormous interest is the way Patel, while acting for Nehru when he went abroad, wrote the fortnightly letters Nehru used to send to the Chief Ministers of States. These show a masterly grasp not only of national matters but also of world affairs.

The Sardar's human approach to national affairs is reflected in his solicitude for Subhas Bose's daughter in Vienna. He wanted a trust to be set up from the Indian National Army Fund for her maintenance as Sarat Bose had refused to recognise her as his brother's daughter.

Indo-Pakistan relations which had never been very friendly since partition were at the first anniversary of the founding of the two Dominions strained to the breaking point. Writing to Nehru from London on 15 August 1948, Lord Mountbatten told

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him of the high esteem in which he was held in England as evinced by the loud applause every time his name was mentioned at a meeting in Albert Hall held to mark the first year of India's independence. On the Kashmir issue, he felt that he should share responsibility for what Nehru was now facing because it was he (Lord Mountbatten) who had "encouraged you to take the Kashmir case to UNO." He added: "I have been struck by the unanimity of thought over here that India was absolutely right to go to UNO. I know that you (and I) have been criticised in India for having gone to UNO because UNO handled the matter in a way that caused disappointment in India. But in the comparatively detached atmosphere of London it is more than ever clear that the alternatives before India were and still are open war or a decision by UNO. There are really no other alternatives except perhaps a continuation of undeclared war with all the risks that it entails of eventually turning into a declared war."

Observing that from his personal knowledge Pakistan was in no position to declare war and was bound to be defeated, he strongly advised Nehru to ponder over the consequences of a war in consultation with the chiefs of staff and to pursue the matter fearlessly at UNO. He concluded this long letter with the plea: "For God's sake don't get yourself plunged in war however great the internal pressure, for once in, you cannot get out of the consequences."

2 Tolstoy Lane
New Delhi 110001
15 December 1972

DURGA DAS

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SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE

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CHAPTER I

PATEL-NEHRU RIFT WIDENS

1

New Delhi
16 December 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I returned from Calcutta via Cawnpore [Kanpur] this evening, reaching Delhi at about 8 p.m. Soon after I went to see Bapu [Gandhi] and he told me about the recent occurrences in Ajmer. Later, I had a visit from Balkrishan Kaul[1] and Mukut Beharilal[2] who gave me further details. I have been very much distressed by these accounts and more specially by what is said to have been the attitude of the Ajmer authorities and police. Some weeks ago Balkrishan Kaul sent me a copy of a letter which he had addressed to you. In this letter he had drawn attention to certain past occurrences and to the probability of a repetition of them. This repetition has now taken place and apparently the local authorities, who had been warned previously, took no adequate steps to prevent this.

Apart from the local effects of what has happened, there are two even more important aspects which are disturbing. One is the recrudescence of this kind of thing on a biggish scale which, if not firmly dealt with, may produce reactions elsewhere. The other is the fact that Ajmer with its dargah is a very famous place, well known outside India, and anything that happens there has considerable publicity in India and the outside world. Our reputation is likely to suffer because of this.

I have no doubt that you have taken steps to put an end to this trouble and to call to account those who may be responsible for it. I shall be grateful if I could be informed of the steps

1 Home & Finance Minister, Ajmer State; took part in non-co-operation movement, 1921; courted jail several times in connection with freedom movement; member, APCC and AICC

2 Leading Congressman of Ajmer-Merwara; Member, Parliament

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taken. The matter might be mentioned also at the next Cabinet meeting.

I was thinking of going to Jaipur on the 19th. In view of what has happened in Ajmer I think I should go there instead of or in addition to the Jaipur visit.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi

[Newspaper reports of the disturbances in Ajmer and Sardar Patel's statement follow.]

DISTURBANCES IN AJMER

Police Open Fire

Ajmer
14 December 1947

After four days' lull, the situation suddenly flared up here at noon today. A communique this evening states that the body of a constable, missing since 6 December, was recovered last evening and was cremated with full military honours. While the funeral procession accompanied by several thousand people was passing through Naya Bazar, a main street, excitement reached high, resulting in the breaking open and looting of a number of shops. The communique adds that this was followed by arson and stabbing, and the police and military had to resort to firing at some places. Six are reported to have been killed.

Curfew was imposed at 2.30 p.m. and military and police patrolling was intensified. By evening, fires were visible in a number of streets. The Chief Commissioner had to resort to a lathi charge and then order firing on an unruly mob looting a shop. The military have taken control of some parts of the disturbed areas. —API

The Hindu, Madras
17 December 1947

Military Open Fire

Ajmer
16 December 1947

Ten persons were killed by rioters and eight more when the military opened fire on a crowd engaged in looting today, according to an official

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communique. Two police constables were killed while cordoning a house from which five bodies have been recovered.

Curfew continues in the city and the military is patrolling the affected areas. —API

The Hindu, Madras
18 December 1947

Troops Patrol Area

Ajmer
17 December 1947

Pandit Nehru is visiting Ajmer on December 20, 1947.

Pandit Nehru in the course of his telegram replying to Prof. N. R. Malkani,[1] President of the Inter-Dominion Minorities Board, today said that he deeply regretted the occurrences at Ajmer. The situation was well in hand and the Durgah Sharif was fully protected. He added that he proposed to visit Ajmer soon.

The situation in Ajmer has been quiet since yesterday. The curfew was, therefore, lifted at 10 this morning for six hours. A large number of Sind refugees have been transferred to Deoli camp providing all necessary facilities. Congress is helping the police in evacuating the members of the minority communities from different parts of the city. Over eight persons have been arrested since Sunday.

The death-roll since the disturbances broke out on the 5th inst. totals 47. Vigorous patrolling by troops, who were reinforced yesterday from Delhi, continues.

Gen. Rajendra Singh, commanding the Delhi Area, paid a two-day visit to Ajmer.

The Hindu
20 December 1947

PATEL'S ASSURANCE TO PAKISTAN MINISTER

Karachi
18 December 1947

Shortly before his departure for Lahore this evening, Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan,[2] Minister for Refugees and Rehabilitation, Government of Pakistan,

1 Constructive Gandhian worker devoted to Harijan uplift and propagation of khadi

2 Muslim League leader who was included in Interim Government as Health Member; earlier, member of Council of State and for a period Minister in Alwar State as a nominee of Political Department

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was handed over a telegram dated 17 December received from Sardar Patel, assuring him that the situation in Ajmer was well in hand and that a platoon of troops was guarding the premises of the Durgah.

The message from Sardar Patel which was in reply to a telegram sent by Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan on 14 December stated: "Many thanks for your telegram which I received today on my return from tour. The situation in Ajmer is well in hand and under control. Adequate protection has been afforded to the Durgah, the sanctity and inviolability of which we shall do our utmost to protect and preserve. The Chief Commissioner has been specially instructed by me to ensure that no harm is done to the Durgah. A platoon of troops is protecting the premises and the access to the Durgah is also guarded. No incident has been reported in Ajmer since yesterday morning."

The Hindu, Madras
20 December 1947

SARDAR'S STATEMENT ON AJMER INCIDENTS

New Delhi
19 December 1947

The following is the text of a statement issued by Sardar Patel on the situation in Ajmer:

The recent disturbances in Ajmer city and its immediate vicinity have attracted a certain amount of attention not so much on account of their intrinsic character but mostly because of the undoubted importance of the holy city of Ajmer. Some misapprehension of the situation also appears to exist in certain quarters where rumours or exaggerated stories have gained some credence. I have now had fairly full reports of them from official and non-official sources as a result largely of personal discussions with the Chief Commissioner and two deputations from Ajmer. In order to allay these misapprehensions, I feel it would be best to give to the public at large a somewhat detailed account of the various incidents.

After an unbroken peace since the riots of 1923, the first communal explosion in Ajmer took place on 27 August 1947 when a crowd of Muslims, which had gathered in front of a mosque with the ostensible purpose of offering prayers but really with the set purpose of creating trouble, attacked a Hindu Mahabir Dal procession. Some bands of Muslims immediately after attacked a number of passers-by in about half a dozen mohallas of the city, resulting in several casualties, all Hindus, with the exception of a Muslim who was dressed like a Hindu. The situation was immediately brought under control and no retaliatory attacks took place. Nevertheless, this unprovoked attack combined with the influx of about ten thousand refugees from the

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neighbouring states kept the tension somewhat alive and created among the Muslim population a feeling that trouble might brew up in retaliation for the previous incident. Under the inspiration of local Muslim League leadership a deliberate plan was put into force to evacuate Muslims from Ajmer to Pakistan and active propaganda was undertaken to see that Muslim personnel in the local administration opted for Pakistan and sent their families in advance. This was in the face of attempts on the part of the local administration to explain to them that it was not open to them to exercise any option and that the Indian Dominion would retain their services if they so wished and the local administration had no choice but to ask those who wished to leave for Pakistan to resign. These activities caused acute tension in Ajmer for some time.

These activities not only resulted in depletion in the administrative ranks but in keeping the tension alive. In the meantime, refugees poured from Sind in increasing numbers; at the same time, the local Muslim leadership realised its mistake and a trek, back from Sind, of Muslims who had left earlier, started. This produced some uneasiness but calm still prevailed. The local administration maintained a strong grip and a vigilant attitude and no untoward incident took place until 5 December when peace was again disturbed over a trifling dispute on the sale of a gramophone between a Muslim and a Sindhi boy in Durgah Bazar, a Muslim locality. This resulted in injuries to three Sindhis, but this clash was followed up in other localities and shops of rival communities were attacked. Within the course of an hour, 41 persons were injured of whom three Muslims died. Four Hindus were among the injured. Next day, curfew was lifted. Stray assaults again took place resulting in injuries to 16 and death of two Muslims. A Sindhi boy was also done to death. The curfew was reimposed.

On 7 December, sporadic incidents took place resulting in the death of six and injuries to two Muslims. On 8 December, two Muslims were attacked in a village near Ajmer. There were two cases of arson and one grave was desecrated. But the gravest and most explosive incident was the disappearance of a Hindu constable on duty in an exclusively Muslim locality. The constable was believed to have been done to death and a search for the body in the locality resulted not in its recovery but in a haul of two canons, one muzzle-loading gun, one breech-loading gun and ten swords, four daggers, gun powder bottles and 300 percussion caps. Collective fines of Rs. 75,000 and Rs. 3,000 were imposed on Hindus and Muslims respectively in different localities and immediate steps were taken to recover the amounts. Military were called out.

As a result of the measures adopted there was no further incident and the city was absolutely quiet during the period between 9 and 13 December, except for some excitement on account of a two-day hartal by the Hindus

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to protest against the imposition of collective fines and a most ill-timed strike by local sweepers.

On the evening of 13 December, on information furnished by some Muslims, the dead body of the constable in a mutilated condition was found buried in a Muslim graveyard and collective fine of Rs. 10,000 was imposed on Muslims in the locality and realised. On 14 December, the body of the dead constable was taken out for cremation. It was proceeding peacefully when on the way, it was stopped by a crowd of Hindus who wanted it to go via a route close to the Durgah and not by the customary route. The motives were obvious and the Chief Commissioner quite properly refused permission. The crowd was recalcitrant and a lathi charge was made. Thereafter the dead body was taken by the usual route and was cremated, but certain mischievous elements began to indulge in arson and looting of Muslim shops in different parts of the city.

The area most affected was Mohalla Ghaskatta where determined fighting took place between the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindu crowd was stoned from a Muslim's house and a country-made bomb was also thrown at it from the house of a prominent Muslim Leaguer. The police came upon the scene but was also attacked by Muslims from the house-top; a bomb was thrown on a constable who died. Another Hindu was admitted in hospital with gun-shot injuries.

The Chief Commissioner himself visited the scene and found intermittent firing from Muslim houses. The area was cordoned off but the inmates of the house did not surrender until the next morning, when six country-made bombs ready for firing were recovered together with many swords and daggers, and an unexploded hand-grenade. From another Muslim house also stones were being thrown and shots were being fired. The police demand for surrender was met by a shot from the house. The police returned the fire and the inmates surrendered. One gun and 255 cartridges were recovered. The right barrel appeared to have been used. The house was tenanted by Mirza Abdul Qader Beg who had already left for Kotah and the gun was found to be his property.

Simultaneously looting and arson of Muslim property by refugees and local Hindus was going on in other localities. The Muslim shops in Mohalla Karakka Chowk, Dhan Mandi, Nala Bazar and Madar Gate were looted. Some big Muslim shops on Station and Imperial Road were attacked and burnt. A mosque was set on fire after the Pesh Imam had been murdered. Attempts were made to set fire to three other mosques. Vigorous action was taken against the looters and the police and military fired many rounds, of which 40 were fired by a party led by the Chief Commissioner himself. A number of rioters were arrested and a few were shot dead. Two persons were arrested when engaged in demolishing a mosque. Most fires were put out

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quickly largely due to the active measures taken by the Chief Commissioner himself. Many buildings could have been saved but the local administration had only one fire-fighting engine at their disposal.

The night of 14-15 December passed off quietly. But on the morning of 15 December, a Muslim family of five persons was attacked and destroyed by Hindu raiders. Four Muslims were killed while raiding a house. Four Muslims and seven Hindus were shot down when engaged in looting. Over 100 persons were arrested for substantive offences of arson and looting. On 16 December, six Hindus were arrested while looting some Muslim houses. The dead body of a Muslim was found on the Beawar Road. One country-made bomb was recovered from a deserted mosque. The situation had, however, shown signs of improvement after the initial outburst on 14 December, and the curfew was lifted on 17 December. Since the midday of 15 December and up to this morning 90 incidents had happened and the city was showing signs of returning confidence.

Figures of Casualties

The total number of casualties since 15 December are as follows:

	Killed		Wounded	
	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims
By rioters	5	31	21	62
By police firing	1	3	—	—
By military firing	8	7	2	2

There has been severe loss of property but the prompt action of the local military and police circumscribed the loss, the main losses being restricted to eight big Muslim shops at Station and Imperial Road. Others were petty shops stocking books, glass bangles, potatoes, coal etc. In all 41 shops were looted and 16 burnt, of which only three are total wrecks. Intensive efforts are being made to recover the property and to arrest the offenders. A few truck loads of property worth thousands of rupees has already been recovered and deposited in the kotwali.

I have received enquiries from influential Muslims about the Durgah. I am very glad to say that through all these disturbances the Durgah has escaped any damage whatsoever. I should like to assure its devotees everywhere that adequate measures have been taken for its protection. Government also hope that peace and normal conditions will soon be restored in this historic city which enshrines an enviable tradition of communal concord and which is standing testimony of all that is best in Indian culture. —API

21 December 1947

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New Delhi
23 December 1947

My dear Iengar,[1]

I learnt yesterday that you had been to Ajmer presumably to acquaint the Prime Minister with the true situation there. I was somewhat surprised to hear of it because I thought that as a senior and experienced officer you would see the implications of it. In the first place, the position of the Chief Commissioner is somewhat analogous to that of the head of a province, except that in all matters and not merely in the Central field he is subordinate to the Central Government. He would, therefore, be entitled to resent any inquest by any person other than a Minister of Government or the Secretary of the Ministry concerned. Secondly, I had already issued a statement to the Press on the situation in Ajmer-Merwara in so far as I had been able to apprise it during discussions with the Chief Commissioner at Jaipur and two deputations, one in Delhi and the other at Jaipur. I told Jawaharlal about it on the 19th. I do not know if he told you about it, but a summary of the statement was broadcast from All India Radio and also appeared in the Evening News of the same day. In these circumstances, your visit was bound to be taken as having arisen out of the Prime Minister's dissatisfaction with the statement that I issued or with the Chief Commissioner's handling of the situation. As an official you would, of course, appreciate how much such an impression affects the prestige of Government and the local administration.

2. Of course, I realise that you are subject to the Prime Minister's orders, but I still feel that if you had placed this point of view which, of course, as an official you were in a better position to realise, the Prime Minister would have considered twice before acting on his suggestion. If the Prime Minister could not go and still he wanted some Minister should go, he could have asked me or Gopalaswami[2] or any other Minister, if he felt that some

[1] H. V. R. Iengar: ICS; Secretary, Ministry of Planning, Government of India; first Principal Private Secretary to Prime Minister Nehru; later Home Secretary under Sardar Patel; retired as Governor, Reserve Bank of India

[2] Gopalaswami Ayyangar: P.C.S.; Prime Minister of Kashmir, 1937-43; Member, Constituent Assembly; Minister without Portfolio, Government of India, 1947-48; Leader of Indian Delegation to UN Security Council, 1948; Minister for Railways and Transport

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other Minister other than myself should go. I hope you will not misunderstand my writing to you in this strain; I feel that, having regard to our previous contacts, I am entitled to point these facts to you on a purely personal basis.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

H. V. R. Iengar, Esq.
Principal Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
New Delhi

3

New Delhi
23 December 1947

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am surprised—perhaps "shocked" would be a more appropriate description—to hear that you sent Iengar to Ajmer-Merwara.

I had already reported to you about the Ajmer situation, of which I had received [information] from Shankar Prasad[1] who met me at Jaipur at my request. I had also given a detailed account of the happenings in Ajmer to the Press on the same day. Although it did not appear in the morning papers until the 20th, its summary had appeared on the radio and in the Evening News [New Delhi] on the 19th. In these circumstances, the visit could have had only one significance in the eyes of the local public, namely, that it was to get an "independent" account of the happenings as you were not quite satisfied either with the account I gave or with the local handling of the situation. The former interpretation would be almost tragic, while the latter would imply no confidence in an officer of the standing and seniority of the Chief Commissioner who could be subordinate only either to a Minister or the Secretary to Government concerned. Apart from this, Shankar Prasad is one of the ablest officers of UP, whose efficiency and honesty and impartiality are beyond reproach. I will not be surprised if this has disheartened Shankar Prasad already and of course affected his prestige. In any case if you were not satisfied

1 ICS; Magistrate & Collector, Meerut, 1946-47; Chief Commissioner, Ajmer-Merwara, 1947-48; Chief Commissioner, Delhi, 1948-54; Secretary, Kashmir Affairs, Government of India, 1958-65

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with the report, you could have sent Gopalaswami or some other Minister for personal enquiry and report.

I quite appreciate that there was a move to discredit the local administration on the part of Messrs Kaul and Bhargava. I hope Iengar's visit has disillusioned you about them. If so, something will have been gained, though the whole proceeding is such as fills me with considerable distress.

I can only express the hope that we have seen the last of such "visits of inspection."

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

4

17 York Road
New Delhi
23 December 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just received your two letters of today's date. First as regards Iengar's visit to Ajmer. I told you that I intended going to Ajmer from Jaipur. Iengar was going with me to both places and information of this was sent to the officers concerned. Quite apart from what the local authorities did, the recent occurrences in Ajmer were of primary importance and were likely to have far-reaching consequences. Next to Delhi itself, Ajmer is probably more important from this point of view than any other place in India. What happens in Ajmer might well affect our whole policy for better or worse. It was for this reason that I decided to pay a visit there, not so much from the local but the national point of view. Suddenly, owing to the death of my nephew, I had to cancel my visit. I thought this would have a bad effect in Ajmer as my visit had been announced and was eagerly looked forward to. That visit was intended to show to the country generally that we were anxious to do all in our power whenever such a situation arose and were taking a personal interest in it.

As I was not going, I asked Iengar to proceed to Ajmer with my apologies and further to say that I would try to come later if that was necessary. I felt I owed that personal approach in the circumstances.

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There was no question of sitting in judgment over any officer or official account. It was an approach to the public, especially the sufferers in the recent riots, in order to hearten them and lessen their fear. After such an occurrence I think it is very desirable for such personal approaches to be made both from the point of view of the officers and the public.

I think Shankar Prasad is a good and impartial officer—that has been my experience of him in the past. Why his prestige or reputation should suffer by my sending someone to Ajmer, I do not quite see. In any event the most important consideration is surely the effect on the public and not merely the reaction of an officer. We can hardly function on the purely official level when panic seizes the people or psychological conditions arise which may lead to disaster. The stakes are too high for us to get tied up in official red tape.

You will appreciate that I am also concerned with the prestige of our officers and am anxious that nothing should be done to injure it in any way. But the prestige of an officer or indeed our own prestige is after all a secondary matter when other vital issues are at stake. If we do the right thing with the public, our prestige will take care of itself, and so will the officers'.

An important question arises—Am I to be constrained in taking any action in regard to inspection or visit or like matters, which I consider necessary? That surely is an impossible position for me or any PM anywhere. Am I not to send a personal representative to any place either for a private inquiry or to convey a message? That would make me a prisoner without freedom to act in accordance with what I might consider the needs of the situation.

About your second letter, I am very sorry that what I wrote to you gave you pain. I am myself very unhappy about the trend of events and the difficulties that have arisen between you and me. It seems that our approaches are different, however much we may respect each other, and the issues that have arisen have to be considered very carefully and objectively by all of us. If I am to continue as Prime Minister I cannot have my freedom restricted and I must have a certain liberty of direction. Otherwise, it is better for me to retire. I do not wish to take any hasty step, nor would you wish to take it. We must, therefore, give full thought to the situation that has arisen, so that our decisions may be for the good of the country we have sought to serve these many years. If unfortunately either you or I have

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to leave the Government of India, let this be done with dignity and goodwill. On my part I would gladly resign and hand over the reins to you.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

5

DRAFT

24 December 1947

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thanks for your letter of 23 December.

It was common knowledge between us that our approaches on certain vital problems were different but as on the conclusions or final decisions there was no difference, we pulled on together so long in the common interest of the country, particularly as the stakes involved were very heavy.

The stand that you have taken in your letter of yesterday involves, in my humble opinion, issues on which there appear to be differences of vital character between us. You seem to feel that my action in explaining what I consider to be the probable consequences of any action taken by you regarding matters which fall within my ministerial responsibility or in venturing to question the propriety or soundness of any action which ignores or affects such responsibility results in restraining or constraining your liberty or your freedom which you consider necessary for the due discharge of your responsibility. I am afraid I cannot subscribe to this view.

I shall maintain that your sending Iengar to Ajmer was not right and its reactions on the public mind as well as on the mind of the officer concerned cannot but be far from desirable. The other matters referred to in your letter are, I think, not relevant.

I have no desire to restrain your liberty of direction in any manner nor have I ever done so in the past. It is also not my desire to hustle you or to embarrass you in any manner, but when it is clear to us that on the fundamental question of our respective spheres of responsibility, authority and action there is such vital difference of opinion between us, it would not be in the interest of the cause which we both wish to serve to continue to pull on longer.

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On the other question also I do not think that the manner of my approach was wanting in courtesy, but as I have already written to Gopalaswami, I will not say anything more.

The question of your resignation or your abdicating your functions does not arise at all. I am at one with you in that the decision may be taken with dignity and goodwill and I will strain every nerve to help you in doing so but you will not, I am sure, want me to continue long as an ineffective colleague. Under the restrictions [of] ministerial responsibility which you consider legitimate and which, judging from the stand you have taken in Gopalaswami's case also, would include even another minister's encroachment, under your direction, on such responsibility, it would be impossible for me to function.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

6

New Delhi
29 December 1947

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 29 December 1947.

I agree that the matter had better be discussed at a Cabinet meeting and find that one had already been convened.

About Ajmer, I enclose a copy of a letter which Shankar Prasad has written to [V.] Shankar[1] and which was received by him today. You will notice that Iengar's visit has had adverse reactions locally and has considerably upset Shankar Prasad himself. I am glad you agree that Shankar Prasad is an able and competent officer. I should go a little further and say that officers of his calibre are rather rare. We can ill-afford to keep such officers discontented for no fault of theirs. I am also sending a copy of the letter which Shankar is sending to Shankar Prasad under my instructions, but I hope, if you visit Ajmer, you will succeed in removing the impression both from his mind as well as from that of the local people that there was any kind of inquisition at all, or that there was any lack of confidence on our part in Shankar Prasad's impartiality or efficient conduct of affairs.

1 ICS; Sardar Patel's Private Secretary from September 1946 up to time of Sardar's death in December 1950; later Defence Secretary, Government of India

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I learn from Shankar Prasad's letter that Iengar visited certain places and saw some people in Ajmer. I do not know if Iengar has presented you with any report on his visit to Ajmer. If he has done so and if you have no objection, I should like to have a copy of the report for my information.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister of India
17 York Road
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

Chief Commissioner's Office
Ajmer
22 December 1947

My dear Vidya Shankar,

Now that the disturbances are over, I take the liberty of referring to the hangover.

2. Iengar rang me up on my return from Jaipur to say that he would be in Ajmer on Saturday, 20 December, to look into events here. As I was not clear about the nature of his brief, I rang you up. When Iengar arrived here, he told me that he would inspect the damage and also meet the members of the Advisory Council, especially Messrs. Mukat Biharilal and [Balkrishna] Kaul, who had apparently provided the impulse for the inquisition. We visited the city accompanied with representative non-officials invited by me and finally landed in the Durgah. At the Durgah, the Khadims and the Muslims requested Iengar to receive a deputation. He consulted me and I said that he may receive them. The following morning, he received successively in deputation the Muslims, the Khadims, the members of the Advisory Council, the Mahasabha, the Arya Samaj, and the Press. After a discussion with me, he left on Sunday noon.

3. I am rather mystified at these proceedings. The object of the inquiry was clearly to test the value of my statements through an independent observer. As I did not wish to impede the inquiry, I did not stand in the way of any of the numerous deputations. Apparently, it has not been considered advisable to communicate to me what grounds there are for an open enquiry, nor what has been the result of further researches. As the inquiry was held after the issue of the Government communique, the impression created inevitably in all quarters is that I had not only not succeeded in clearing the situation,

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but had possibly misled Government into accepting facts and conclusions, which, though announced, were gravely open to doubt. Such an anomalous position discredits both myself and the official pronouncement. I do not know whether in the light of further inquiries Government intend to reaffirm or modify the original pronouncement. These unusual proceedings have weakened my position, bred public distrust and aroused bitter partisan comment. As a public servant, I know that I have no right to question the decision of Government and would not appear to be doing so. My personal credit and position, though of concern to me, can of course be of no consequence to Government in the issue. However, I feel that I am at least entitled to know what I have done to deserve such open lack of confidence that a public inquisition by a super-official should have been considered necessary.

4. In conclusion, I would request you to bring my submission to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister.

Yours sincerely,
Shankar Prasad

ENCLOSURE II

Ministry of Home Affairs
New Delhi
29 December 1947

My dear Shankar Prasad,

Thank you for your letter of 22 December 1947, which I have placed before H.M.

He has asked me to say, on the authority of the Prime Minister, that Iengar's visit was in no way intended to be an enquiry, but was solely due to the Prime Minister's inability to visit Ajmer and to his desire that, even though he could not himself go there, he should maintain, through Iengar, personal touch with the local people in the disturbed conditions through which they had just passed. It was felt that such a visit would have a steadying influence on the local atmosphere. There was no suggestion whatsoever of testing the value of your statements or of any lack of confidence in your ability or efficiency. On that point, H.M. has asked me to say that you enjoy the full confidence of Government and that Government feel that you have managed a very difficult situation with tact, skill and impartiality.

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar
Private Secretary to H.M.

Shankar Prasad Esq., ICS
Chief Commissioner
Ajmer

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7

New Delhi
29 December 1947

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of the 29th about Ajmer. I am sorry Shankar Prasad has felt at all mystified or upset or imagined that there was any inquiry. The whole object of Iengar going there was to convey my personal regret at my inability to go and my personal interest to the various people concerned who were much agitated. Quite apart from this fact, it was clear that the Muslims of Ajmer were terrified and were leaving in large numbers. As I had told you, I have received telegrams from Sind also, among them from Prof. Malkani, to visit Ajmer immediately in order to calm down the apprehensions of the Muslims there. Bapu had likewise asked me to do so.

Iengar did give me a report on his return. I have not got it with me, but I shall try to find it and send it to you.

I understand that about 10,000 out of 50,000 Muslims have been left in Ajmer and the exodus continues. I do not know how far these figures are correct. This indicates that while the situation is fully under control, there is fear among the Muslims of further attacks upon them. I do not know if this fear is justified. But we should try to remove it. The RSS[1] there and elsewhere is in an aggressive mood and issues threats which frighten many people.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

[1] Volunteer organisation founded in Maharashtra with object of protecting Hindu religion and culture; in course of time it spread to other parts of country

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8

New Delhi
11 January 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

You must have received my letter with a note some days ago [See enclosure]. I suggested that we might meet at Gandhiji's place for a further talk on this subject. If you could suggest some time convenient to you I shall fix it up with Bapu. I understand that you will be going away for some days to Bombay and Ahmedabad. I think it would be desirable for this meeting to take place before your departure.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

MR. NEHRU'S NOTE OF 6 JANUARY 1948 TO MAHATMA GANDHI

The recent correspondence between Sardar Patel and me has raised important issues of vital consequence; and yet the origin of that correspondence related to a relatively minor matter.

2. It is true that there are not only temperamental differences between Sardar and me but also a difference in approach in regard to economic and communal matters. These differences have persisted for a large number of years, ever since we worked together in the Congress. Nevertheless, in spite of these differences, there was obviously a very great deal in common in addition to mutual respect and affection and, broadly speaking, the same national political aim of freedom. Because of this we functioned together during all these years and did our utmost to adapt ourselves to each other. If the Congress came to a decision, we accepted it, though there might have been a difference in implementing it.

3. Our political aim having been more or less achieved, the other questions, on which we have differed to some extent, come more and more to the forefront. At the same time crises face the country which make it incumbent on all of us not to stress the differences but rather to emphasise the points of agreement and to co-operate in the face of these crises. So far as the economic

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and communal matters are concerned, we are bound down by Congress policy and decisions, and both of us, as well as other Congressmen, must necessarily work in accordance with them. On the communal issue, the Congress standpoint has been clarified recently. On the economic issue, the broad lines of policy have been laid down and, no doubt, further details will soon follow. The Cabinet will have to consider these matters soon. We have delayed too long already in laying down an economic policy and this has led to differing interpretations and statements by Ministers.

4. We may therefore, for the moment, leave out of consideration these important matters and come down to the immediate issue. This issue essentially relates to the functions of the Prime Minister. It is something much more than a personal issue and it should be considered, therefore, as a question of principle, whoever the Prime Minister might be.

5. As I conceive it, the Prime Minister's role is, and should be, an important role. He is not only a figurehead but a person who should be more responsible than anyone else for the general trend of policy and for the co-ordination of the work of various Government departments. The final authority necessarily is the Cabinet itself. But in the type of democratic set-up we have adopted, the Prime Minister is supposed to play an outstanding role. This, I think, is important (again quite apart from personal factors), as otherwise there will be no cohesion in the Cabinet and the Government and disruptive tendencies will be at work.

6. Speaking for myself, I have at present two functions to perform in government. As Minister for External Affairs, I function like any other Minister and my Ministry is like any other Ministry. As Prime Minister, however, I have a special function to perform which covers all the Ministries and departments and indeed every aspect of governmental authority. This function cannot be easily defined and the proper discharge of it depends a great deal on the spirit of co-operation animating all the parties concerned. Inevitably, in discharging this function of Prime Minister I have to deal with every Ministry not as head of one particular Ministry but as a co-ordinator and a kind of supervisor. Naturally, this can only be done effectively with tact and goodwill and without in any way diminishing the prestige of other Ministers. Other Ministers must not normally be interfered with and should have freedom to carry out their work without unnecessary interference.

7. If this position is recognized, then no present difficulty arises, and if at any time a difficulty does arise, it can be resolved by personal contact and discussion between the parties concerned. Because of this I have endeavoured in almost every matter of importance to confer with Sardar Patel.

8. The immediate issue arose out of my sending Iengar to Ajmer. I think that my sending him was not only completely within my competence but also it was an eminently desirable thing to do in the circumstances and that

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undoubtedly it did some good. This opinion of mine has been strengthened by my visit to Ajmer. Iengar had nothing to do with holding any kind of an inquiry or sitting in judgment in any way on the officials in Ajmer. He was sent as the eyes and ears of the PM and to convey the PM's regret for his having had to cancel his visit to Ajmer previously. In Ajmer and elsewhere, we have to deal with psychological problems and mental states. The approach to the people direct is always important when dealing with such problems. The importance of Ajmer had induced me to pay a visit there even at inconvenience. I could not go then because of a death in the family. My not going was variously interpreted in Ajmer and gave rise to all manner of suspicions and rumours. Iengar's going helped to lessen these suspicions somewhat among the people by making them realise that the Government was greatly interested in their peace and welfare. My subsequent visit, of course, did much more good. It did not, as it was not meant to, affect the position of the Chief Commissioner, whom indeed I praised publicly for his ability and impartiality. But apart from these facts the question remains: Is the PM entitled to take such a step and who is to [be the] judge of this? If the PM cannot even take this step and is not himself to be the judge of what is proper and what is not in such matters, then he cannot function properly or fulfil his functions. Indeed, he does not function at all as the PM should. The mere fact that he is PM presumably leads to the conclusion that he is capable of judging aright and carrying out the policy laid down. If he is not capable of this, then he should cease to be PM. Indeed, this means abdication of his functions and he cannot in future function with any effectiveness. There will be no proper co-ordination of governmental authority and, in such circumstances, the administrative machinery weakens and there are rival pulls.

9. If this view is correct, then the PM should have full freedom to act when and how he chooses, though of course such action must not be an undue interference with local authorities who are immediately responsible. The PM obviously is as much interested as anyone else in having the loyalty and co-operation of the services.

10. In the event of the PM not functioning in this way, then he can hardly carry on as a mere figurehead and much harm may be done to the services as well as to the public at large by the enunciation of contradictory policies by Ministers.

11. This is the background. But whatever the theory may be, practical difficulties continually arise. Normally speaking, the best way out of these difficulties would be for some rearrangement in the Cabinet to be made which would cast the responsibility on one person more than anyone else. In the present set-up this means that either I should go out or that Sardar Patel should go out. For my part, I would greatly prefer my going out. Of course this going out of either of us need not and should not mean any kind o

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subsequent opposition. Whether we are in or out of Government we remain, I hope, not only loyal Congressmen but loyal colleagues, and we will still try to pull together in our respective spheres of activity.

12. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that if either of us goes out at the present juncture it would create a sensation both nationally and internationally, and the consequences may not be good. At any time this position would have to be faced; but at the present juncture, with the Kashmir issue and the great problem of rehabilitation facing us, not to mention the States and the growth of communal organisations in India, any such parting of ways may well have very serious consequences affecting the good of India. None of us wants to do anything which may be at all injurious to the national good, even though our views of the national good may differ somewhat. After having given very serious thought to this matter during the last fortnight I have come to the conclusion that as far as possible we must avoid, at this particular juncture, any parting of ways in Government. We are too much in the transitional stage and a serious shake-up of Government may well lead to an upsetting of the apple cart. I think that we should carry on for some months more till the Kashmir issue is more clarified and other problems have also been tackled to some extent. The way to do this must be the fullest consultation about every important matter. At the same time I do feel that the Prime Minister's function, as defined above, must be appreciated.

13. If, however, this is not considered possible, then the only alternative left is for either me or Sardar Patel to leave the Cabinet. As I have said above, I consider this an undesirable alternative in the present context, and I have come to this conclusion as objectively as possible. If someone has to leave, I repeat, I would prefer to leave.

14. Latterly there has been a growing tendency towards a lack of cohesion in the various Ministries and Departments of Government. This has resulted in members of the Services also being affected. This is unfortunate and, in any event, has to be countered, for if the Cabinet and Government do not work jointly, all work must necessarily suffer and a psychology produced in the country which comes in the way of co-operative working.

15. Probably before very long we shall have to consider a refashioning of the governmental set-up in the sense of introducing Deputy Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and the like. It may be desirable to put certain Departments in charge of Deputy Ministers, each group of such Deputy Ministers being under the supervision of a Minister. This would make the real Cabinet a somewhat smaller body. However, this can be seen to later. At the present moment the allocation of portfolios is not a very logical one and some are very heavy indeed.

16. The States Ministry is a new Ministry which has to deal with vital questions. If I may say so, it has dealt with these questions thus far with remarkable

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success and surmounted the many difficulties that are continually arising. I feel, however, that many decisions have been taken involving matters of principle without any reference to the Cabinet. For my part I agree with those decisions; but it seems to me a wrong procedure for these decisions to be taken without reference to the Cabinet or to the PM. Being a new Ministry, it functions naturally outside normal procedure. To some extent this is inevitable and quick decisions have to be taken. But an attempt should be made to bring this functioning within the terms of our ordinary procedure.

17. Before the Constituent Assembly meets or some time during its next session, we have to come to some decision regarding our general economic policy. The problem of rehabilitation may well be tied up with this policy.

9

New Delhi
12 January 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 11 January 1948 regarding your note to Gandhiji.

I am sending herewith a copy of my note which I am sending to Gandhiji. I am sorry I could not deal with this matter earlier as I have been away most of the time. During the short time that I was here I was virtually snowed under with work.

You can fix up with Bapu for a discussion any time that suits you. I shall be leaving for Bhavnagar and Bombay on the morning of 15 January 1948.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
17 York Road
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

SARDAR PATEL'S NOTE TO MAHATMA GANDHI

I have carefully read Jawaharlal's note sent to you, a copy of which was sent to me.

2. There is no disagreement on the existence of temperamental differences and different outlook on economic matters and those affecting Hindu-Muslim relations. Both of us, however, place the interests of the country above these personal differences and, aided by mutual regard, respect and love for each

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other, have co-operated in a common endeavour. Through our joint efforts we have weathered many a storm that beset us and despite such differences we have got over one of the most critical phases in the history of any country or any government. It is painful and rather tragic to reflect that we cannot carry this any further, but I fully realise the strength of feeling and conviction behind the Prime Minister's stand as regards his own position.

3. I have tried my best to appreciate what he says on that subject, but howsoever much I have tried to understand it on the twin basis of democracy and Cabinet responsibility, I have found myself unable to agree with his conception of the Prime Minister's duties and functions. That conception, if accepted, would raise the Prime Minister to the position of a virtual dictator, for he claims "full freedom to act when and how he chooses." This in my opinion is wholly opposed to democratic and Cabinet system of government.

4. The Prime Minister's position, according to my conception, is certainly pre-eminent; he is first among equals. But he has no overriding powers over his colleagues; if he had any, a Cabinet and Cabinet responsibility would be superfluous. In my view the Prime Minister, as the leader of the party and the head of the whole administration, is inevitably concerned that Cabinet decisions are effective and that there is no conflict between one Ministry and another. But the entire responsibility for implementing the policy of Government rests upon the Ministers and Ministries under them which are concerned with the subject matter of the Cabinet decisions. He has accordingly the right to ask for information from the Minister concerned as well as the right to consult and advise on the lines of policy to be adopted and even the manner in which the policy is to be implemented. But the responsibility for the implementation of the policy must be that of the Ministry concerned and of the Minister in charge, and the Prime Minister should influence action by way of consultation with and advice to the Minister. I feel sure that this position of the Prime Minister not only fully safeguards his pre-eminence and makes him an effective head of the Administration but is also fully in accord with democratic principles and rules of ministerial and Cabinet responsibility. This is also, as far as I have been able to ascertain, in accord with the UK practice.

5. The incident of Iengar's visit to Ajmer was not the immediate cause of the whole matter coming to a head. If the Prime Minister will recall, it was on the issue of Gopalaswami's telegram to the East Punjab Government authorising the loan of motor vehicles to the Kashmir State that he gave expression to his view that Gopalaswami should be given full latitude in helping in Kashmir matters and took a stand which meant that the States Ministry should virtually submit not only to the Prime Minister personally dealing with issues arising out of the Kashmir situation (this was already in force) but also to other Ministers having a finger in the pie while the Ministry

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which was normally concerned should be at best a repository of information as and when it was given.

6. Nor is Iengar's visit the only matter in which I had to point out to the Prime Minister the inadvisability of a course which he had taken without even consulting me. Several occasions in the past few months—since 15 August—have given rise to similar correspondence. In some the Prime Minister had extended to me the courtesy of informing me beforehand of the action he intended to take and I had tendered my advice in favour of or against the proposed course of action as seemed to me appropriate. If even the tendering of advice or the pointing out of the inadvisability of a course of action or the submission that a particular matter fell within my responsibility proves irksome or irritating to the Prime Minister and interferes with the exercise of his functions, the position is one which is wholly inconsistent with a democratic system of government.

7. As regards Iengar's visit to Ajmer, I regret I am unable to share the Prime Minister's view of its nature or its consequences. Iengar went to Ajmer, inspected various places, received deputations and conferred with officials and non-officials; the public mind is bound to associate it with an inquisition. The Chief Commissioner took it in that light and stated that the public also felt it as such. It was not that I did not want anyone to go. When the Prime Minister mentioned to me that he wanted to go, I promptly agreed that he should go. I did not come to know of Iengar's visit in substitution of the Prime Minister's until after Iengar had returned. I should have been glad to deputise for the Prime Minister if he had asked me; as I wrote to him, any other Minister could have been asked to go. But to send an official was, in my submission, hardly likely to be interpreted otherwise than in the manner in which it was taken by the public and the Chief Commissioner. The question is not whether the Prime Minister was entitled to take this step or not or whether he is not to be the judge of the propriety of the action but whether I, as a Minister, was wrong in pointing out to him the inadvisability of the course he had taken and the probable consequences it entailed.

8. A reference has also been made to the functioning of the States Ministry. I cannot recall any one instance in which I have taken any decision of major policy without the approval or confirmation of my colleagues. The only instance in which I anticipated a Cabinet decision was that of the merger of Orissa and Chhattisgarh States; subsequent confirmation of my action practically without discussion upholds my judgment in anticipating it. The matter was obviously such that the postponement of the decisive act would have been fraught with serious consequences and would have let slip an opportunity which would have perhaps recurred only after considerable patience, toil and trouble to all concerned.

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9. The Prime Minister has also referred to his preference for leaving office if mutual accommodation cannot be secured. I maintain, however, that if anybody has to go, it should be myself. I have long passed the age of active service. The Prime Minister is the acknowledged leader of the country and is comparatively young; he has established an international position of pre-eminence for himself. I have no doubt that the choice between him and myself should be resolved in his favour. There is, therefore, no question of his quitting office.

10

17 York Road
New Delhi
13 January 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 12 January which I received today together with the note which was enclosed with it. I can quite understand how terribly busy you must have been since your return from Jammu.

2. I hardly think it is worthwhile my attempting to write another note on the subject. Having indicated our respective viewpoints to some extent, the only thing that remains is for us to discuss this matter with Bapu.

3. I should like to say, however, that I still find a considerable difference in your appreciation of the PM's position and mine. There is no question, of course, of the PM or anyone else being a dictator. So far as I know, the position in practice in the United Kingdom is in consonance with what I have suggested.

4. I fear it is not possible to fix up a meeting and discussion with Bapu before you leave for Bhavnagar. In any event it would be improper to put an additional burden on him just now when he is fasting.[1] I mentioned this matter to him and he said that we might postpone the discussion for a little while till certain immediate and urgent issues had been dealt with. Meanwhile, of course, Bapu's fast overshadows other matters and we shall have

[1] It was alleged in some quarters that the fast was undertaken by Gandhiji to persuade the Government of India to make a payment of Rs. 55 crores to Pakistan out of the cash balances, after partition. This is not borne out by the statements issued by Gandhiji at the time. Sardar Patel's statements on cash balances are given in Appendix I and Gandhiji's statements in Appendix II.

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to wait for developments. As soon as the opportunity arises I hope we shall be able to fix up a meeting with Bapu.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

11

13 January 1948

Poojya Bapu,

I have to leave for Kathiawad at seven this morning. It is agonising beyond endurance to have to go away when you are fasting. But stern duty leaves no other course.

The sight of your anguish yesterday has made me disconsolate. It has set me furiously thinking.

The burden of work has become so heavy that I feel crushed under it. I now see that it would do no good to the country or to myself to carry on like this any more. It might even do harm.

Jawahar is even more burdened than I. His heart is heavy with grief. May be I have deteriorated with age and am no more any good as a comrade to stand by him, and lighten his burden. The Maulana (Azad)[1] too is displeased with what I am doing and you have again and again to take up cudgels on my behalf. This also is intolerable to me.

In the circumstances, it will perhaps be good for me and for the country if you now let me go. I cannot do otherwise than I am doing. And if thereby I become burdensome to my lifelong colleagues and a source of distress to you and still I stick to office, it would mean—at least that is how I would feel—that I let the lust of power blind my eyes and so was unwilling to quit. You should quickly deliver me from this intolerable situation.

I know it is no time for argument while you are fasting. But since I can be of no help even in ending your fast, I do not know what else there is for me to do. I therefore earnestly beseech you to give up your fast and get this question settled soon.

[1] Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: Leading Muslim Divine; staunch nationalist from Khilafat days; Congress President, 1939-46; member, CA; Education Minister in Nehru Cabinet

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It may help even remove the causes that have prompted your fast.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

[See Appendix I for Sardar Patel's Statement on cash balances and his Press conference.]

[See Appendix II for agency reports on Gandhi's fast and his reference to the cash balances issue at his prayer meetings in New Delhi.]

12

TELEGRAM

68 Marine Drive
Bombay
18 January 1948

Mahatma Gandhi
Birla House
New Delhi

HAVE JUST HEARD NEWS OF TERMINATION OF YOUR FAST. THANK GOD WHOLE COUNTRY WILL BE MUCH RELIEVED AT NEWS.

VALLABHBHAI

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CHAPTER II

GANDHI'S MARTYRDOM : PATEL & NEHRU MAKE UP

13

New Delhi
1 February 1948

My dear Baldev Singh,

I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to the Chiefs of the three Services my very warm appreciation of the excellent arrangements that were made yesterday for Gandhiji's funeral. [Gandhi was assassinated on 30 January] The disciplined manner in which the arrangements passed off on the whole was due in a very large measure to the team-work, efficiency and expedition with which all those who were in charge of the arrangements set down to their task. The fact that all this could be accomplished at such short notice is also a tribute to the spirit and comradeship with which all the arms of the Services worked. We have all reason to be proud of this signal achievement.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh
Minister for Defence
New Delhi

14

New Delhi
3 February 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I enclose herewith two Press cuttings, one from the Statesman of today [in the "Letters to the Editor" column] and another from a well-known Communist whose speech is reported in the Madras Mail. Of course they do not know that my resignation is already there. I had written again to Bapu when I left for Bombay on the last occasion but his unexpected death has left the matter in the air.

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The Statesman's contention takes a constitutional stand and I think he [the correspondent] is right. This is an additional reason for my resignation. Your yesterday's speech has also reinforced the need for such as obvious failure. I do not wish to do anything to embarrass you at this critical juncture, but when there is a public demand, a challenge which is obviously justified, I feel I must once again request you to help me.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

ENCLOSURE

Sir,

Sardar Patel should resign for the failure of his Security Department to protect Mahatma Gandhi. There was ample warning of brewing disaffection against Gandhiji when the bomb was thrown at his prayer meeting.

When King Alexander of Yugoslavia and the French Foreign Minister were assassinated in Marseilles, the French Minister of the Interior tendered his resignation; he publicly admitted his lapse in not being able to protect so distinguished a visitor.

Yours etc.,
A. Sanyal
Calcutta
31 January 1948

The Statesman
New Delhi
3 February 1948

From our correspondent

Bezwada, 31 January 1948—A youth was stabbed to death and thirty persons were seriously injured in a sudden clash between two parties stated to be Communist and members of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. Eight persons have been admitted to hospital.

The news that Gandhiji was assassinated by the editor of a Hindu Mahasabha paper caused tension among rival political parties here and culminated in a clash.

Mr. P. Sundarayya, a Communist leader, addressing a public meeting here, said that the Hindu Mahasabha, RSS and Sardar Patel planned to kill the Mahatma with a view to perpetuating fascist rule in India. This allegation caused bitterness in a vast section of the people.

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About 8,000 RSS volunteers from all over Andhra assembled in the town to have a rally, which was, however, cancelled due to Gandhiji's death.

The Communist propaganda aggravated the situation and a clash broke out when a car carrying RSS volunteers was attacked, injuring some of them.

Street-fight is reported in Gandhinagar and Governorpet areas between RSS volunteers and Communists. A crude bomb exploded near the taluk office at 5 p.m. Fortunately none was injured.

The Sub-Divisional Magistrate has promulgated an order under Sec. 144 Cr. PC for a week.

Madras Mail
1 February 1948

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New Delhi
3 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

When Bapu was alive we had hoped to meet him together and discuss various matters that had troubled us somewhat. You will remember our correspondence. In my last letter I had expressed the hope that, in spite of certain differences of opinion and temperament, we should continue to pull together as we had done for so long. This was, I was glad to find, Bapu's final opinion also.

Now, with Bapu's death, everything is changed and we have to face a different and more difficult world. The old controversies have ceased to have much significance and it seems to me that the urgent need of the hour is for all of us to function as closely and co-operatively as possible. Indeed, there is no other way.

I have been greatly distressed by the persistence of whispers and rumours about you and me, magnifying out of all proportion any differences we may have. This has spread to foreign ambassadors and foreign correspondents; mischief-makers take advantage of this and add to it. Even the Services are affected and this is bad. We must put an end to this mischief.

It is over a quarter of a century since we have been closely associated with one another and we have faced many storms and perils together. I can say with full honesty that during this period my affection and regard for you have grown, and I do not think anything can happen to lessen this. Even our differences have

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brought out the far greater points of agreement between us and the respect we bear to each other. We have even learnt to agree to differ and yet carry on together.

Anyway, in the crisis that we have to [face] now after Bapu's death I think it is my duty and, if I may venture to say, yours also for us to face it together as friends and colleagues. Not merely superficially, but in full loyalty to one another and with confidence in each other. I can assure you that you will have that from me. If I have any doubt or difficulty I shall put it frankly to you, and I hope you will do the same to me.

I had hoped to have a long talk with you, but we are so terribly pressed for time that we can hardly see each other in private for long. Some time or other, soon I hope, we shall have this talk and remove any misunderstandings or misapprehensions that may have arisen. Such talks are necessary from time to time. But meanwhile I do not want to wait for this talk and hence this letter, which carries with it my affection and friendship for you.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
5 February 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am deeply touched, indeed overwhelmed, by the affection and warmth of your letter of 3 February. I fully and heartily reciprocate the sentiments you have so feelingly expressed.

We both have been lifelong comrades in a common cause. The paramount interests of our country and our mutual love and regard, transcending such differences of outlook and temperament as existed, have held us together. Both of us have stuck passionately to our respective points of view or methods of work; still we have always sustained a unity of heart which has stood many a stress and strain and which has enabled us to function jointly both in the Congress and in the Government.

Recent events had made me very unhappy and I had written to Bapu when I was going to Bombay appealing to him to relieve me, but his death changes everything and the crisis that

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has overtaken us must awaken in us a fresh realisation of how much we have achieved together and the need for further joint efforts in our grief-stricken country's interests.

I had the good fortune to have a last talk with him for over an hour just before his death and he communicated to me what had passed between you and him as well as his talk with H.E. [Lord Mountbatten]. He had also fixed an appointment to meet both of us the next day. His opinion also binds us both and I can assure you that I am fully resolved to approach my responsibilities and obligations in this spirit.

I agree with you that we must find more time for mutual consultations so that we can keep each other informed of, and in touch with, what is happening and we can thus resolve any points of difference that might arise.

We should also find an early opportunity to have a long talk and clear our minds of any doubts and difficulties that may be there. Continued harping on our differences in public or in private is bad for us, bad for the Services and bad for the country. The sooner we set this at rest once for all and clear the murky atmosphere the better.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

17

New Delhi
5 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

It appears that considerable numbers of prominent RSS people have gone to some of the States, notably Bharatpur and Alwar. They have also taken a good deal of material with them of various kinds. It is possible that they might organise bases there for the purpose of carrying on secret activities elsewhere. Would it not be possible to get the State Governments to ban the organisation? In any event it seems desirable to ask them to do so.

I understand that the RSS in Delhi have started open-air Gita classes which really are meant for them to meet and confer together.

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I think it would be worthwhile for us to consider the banning of the Muslim National Guard and the Khaksars. Khaksars more or less went underground some time ago and have not functioned in public since then. But they have been a mischievous lot and may give trouble in future. So also the Muslim National Guard. Neither is aggressive at present. But the potentialities of mischief are there. In view of our decision against private armies we might take action against their organisations. If you agree, we might consider this matter at the next Cabinet meeting, day after tomorrow.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
6 February 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 February 1948.

Regarding banning of the RSS in the States, we have already sent telegrams to all the bigger States, including Bharatpur and Alwar, to take parallel action in their own territories. I expect many of them will follow our advice. We can deal with those who do not, later.

I have been preparing the ground for action against Alwar and Bharatpur for some time. I am sure you will appreciate the difficulties in taking any hasty and drastic action against them. One holds a prominent position in the Jat community, and the other is a Rajput State. I, therefore, wanted to take action only after I had rallied round myself the support of the Princes themselves. We are well on the way to enlisting this support in respect of Alwar. Bharatpur, I have already been able to calm down as a result of personal contact and discussions. After Alwar is settled, Bharatpur should be a comparatively easy problem. My intention is that, as soon as we have got these two States under our influence, and if necessary, under our control, we would be able to unearth all that has happened and the part which the State and its officials have taken in various crimes.

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As regards the open-air Gita classes started by the RSS, I am having enquiries made. I doubt if it will be possible to interfere with these Gita classes if they are held in private buildings or on private lands, but I have asked the DIG to make enquiries and to see that our men are there to report to us what exactly happens there.

I agree with you that we should ban the Muslim National Guards and Khaksars. We might mention this at the Cabinet meeting tomorrow. In the meantime, I am asking the Home Ministry to be ready to take necessary action on getting the word from me after the Cabinet meeting.

You would also be interested to know that I have today issued instructions to prepare legislation for prohibiting drilling, parades, camps and wearing of semi-military uniforms. Such legislation would be necessary to implement our decision regarding the banning of private armies.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
6 February 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith copy of a secret report which I have received.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

The Socialist Party, it is generally gathered, have decided to exploit the situation created by this tragedy [Gandhi's assassination] to gain power both in the Congress organisation and the Government. The Socialists had refused

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a seat offered to them by Dr. Rajendra Prasad[1] in the Congress Executive. After this tragic event they are keen on having three or four seats in the All-India Working Committee. A camera meeting of all the prominent Socialist workers now in Delhi was held at Mr. Jai Prakash Narain's[2] Delhi residence, where a scheme was decided to implement their dreams. It was decided to launch a regular crusade against Sardar Patel, the Home Member, who had recently taken them to task in his several speeches for their disruptive activities. It was further resolved in that meeting that steps should be taken to oust Dr. Mookerjee,[3] Sardar Patel, Sardar Baldev Singh[4] and one other member whose name has not been definitely known, from the Central Government and to replace them by Mr. J. P. Narain, Ram Manohar Lohia[5] and Kamla Devi Chattopadhyay.[6] The recent Press conference, which exposed their designs, is the first of the series of attempts which they are going to make to achieve their objective. Meetings of their various labour units were also held, where sentimental speeches were delivered by Socialist leaders and the workers were instigated to work in this direction. A regular charge-sheet against Sardar Patel was actually drawn up in that meeting and some Socialists, though not of the top ranks, have gone to such length as to impute motives to Sardar Patel in helping the alleged assassin of Mahatma Gandhi. This was talked by them at several places in open. In order to gain a place for the Bande Matram, a local daily, a scheme was drawn up to strive for the suspension by all fair and foul means of all other daily papers, published in the Capital in Urdu, barring the daily Tej of Lala Desh Bandhu Gupta[7] and their Bande Matram. Regular raids were organised by the Socialists against these papers and some hawkers were purchased to help them in their designs.

[1] Congress leader from Bihar; close associate of Gandhi; lawyer of Patna High Court when he joined Gandhi's satyagraha against British indigo planters in Champaran district, Bihar, 1917; twice President of Indian National Congress; Minister for Food and Agriculture, Interim Government, and in first Nehru Government after Independence; Chairman, Indian Constituent Assembly; first President of Indian Republic, 1950-62

[2] Founder-Secretary, Socialist Party of India; prominent member of Congress till 1948; retired from politics and engaged himself in Sarvodaya (public welfare activities) including Bhoodan (land gift) movement

[3] Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee: Educationist-politician; Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, 1934-38; Finance Minister, Bengal, 1941-42; member, CA; Minister in first Nehru Cabinet; President, Hindu Mahasabha and later of Jan Sangh

[4] Started political career as Akali leader; Development Minister, Punjab, 1942-46; joined Congress and served as Defence Minister, 1946-52

[5] Founder, Socialist Party of India; former General Secretary, Praja-Socialist Party; member, Lok Sabha, 1967

[6] Took part in freedom movement; was jailed several times; President, All-India Women's Conference; founded India Co-operative Union

[7] Leading Congressman of Delhi; member, AICC and Lok Sabha

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Camp Jullundur City
5 February 1948

My dear Sardar,

According to the policy laid down by the Government of India we have also declared Rashtriya [Swayam] Sewak Sangh an unlawful association in our province. Prominent workers of the Sangh have been taken into custody. Some more will be arrested in a day or two. The Chief of the Sangh in our province, Rai Bahadur Badri Dass[1], has resigned from the Sangh. So far there has not been any adverse reaction.

There is one point about which I want your immediate guidance. You know General Mohan Singh has also started a private army known as Desh Sewak Sena. According to the latest policy laid down by the Government of India, private armies cannot function. General Mohan Singh has not so far disbanded his Sena. In case he does not disband, what action would you like the East Punjab Government to take in this connection? An early reply will oblige.

Sincerely yours,
Gopichand Bhargava[2]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

21

New Delhi
9 February 1948

My dear Gopichand,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 February 1948.

Regarding action against the RSS, I am glad you have taken the necessary measures. As regards Desh Sewak Sena, we had a talk this morning. As I told you, please try to persuade General Mohan Singh to disband the Sena on his own, but if he does

[1]Leading member of Punjab bar and for long Chairman of Tribune Trust

[2]Congress worker of Punjab from 1919; elected to Punjab Legislative Assembly in 1937 and again in 1946; Prime Minister of Punjab, 1947-51

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not do so within a reasonable period of time, there is no alternative but to take recourse to the law. Before taking action, I would like to have a talk with him, if necessary.

I am afraid we shall have to take action about the Akal Sena as well. Please let me know at once what you propose to do about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Premier, East Punjab
Jullundur City

22

New Delhi
8 February 1948

My dear Sardarji,

As I am leaving early this morning for Calcutta, I am unable to see you personally. I wanted to speak to you about the arrest of Asutosh Lahiri in Delhi yesterday. He is the General Secretary of the All-Inda Hindu Mahasabha. Of course anyone who is suspected of complicity must be arrested. But so far as my knowledge goes, Lahiri's attitude has been entirely of a different nature. During the last few days he has been most helpful in making Hindusabhaites realise that a complete re-orientation of the policy of the organisation was called for. I shall feel grateful if you will kindly go through his papers and see whether there is a prima facie case against him or not. The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha will meet on Saturday and Sunday next to consider its future policy. Is it possible to allow members of the Working Committee who are now under arrest to attend the meeting, provided, of course they are not arrested in connection with the murder? If anyone of them has been arrested merely on security grounds, you may consider whether this permission may be granted or not. So far as I know, the three members affected are Lahiri, Deshpande and Mahant Digbijoy Nath. This may help me in making the Working Committee itself agree to abandon the present communal politics of the Hindu Mahasabha.

I leave the matter entirely in your hands for I know you will do what is best under the circumstances. I expect to return to Delhi on Friday next. If there is any message to be sent to

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me, you may kindly communicate with me at 77, Asutosh Mookerjee Road, Calcutta. My telephone is South 2455.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

23

New Delhi
8 February 1948

My dear Dr. Syama Prasad,

Thank you for your letter dated 8 February 1948 regarding Asutosh Lahiri.

Lahiri has been detained by the Chief Commissioner on suspicion. We have definite evidence that the conspirators, when they were in Delhi, went to the Mahasabha House in Delhi, and also met Lahiri and had a discussion with him. I am afraid until this particular point is cleared up, it will not be possible for me to intervene and release him for the purpose of the deliberations of the Mahasabha meeting.

Regarding Deshpande and Mahant Digbijoy Nath, the position is much worse. They have been making highly objectionable speeches. Deshpande is reported to have made a speech in Bihar persuading his audience to hang both Jawaharlal and myself. In Delhi, about a couple of days before Gandhiji's death, he and Mahant Digbijoy Nath addressed a public meeting in terms which would offend against the provisions of the law. The question is under consideration whether both of them should not be prosecuted for making those speeches. I am afraid it is difficult in these circumstances to agree to release these three persons, but when you come here, we can have a further talk and decide what to do.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Minister for Industry & Supply
Government of India
Calcutta

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Government House
Patna
10 February 1948

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

Bombay papers as well as papers from CP received during the last few days are full of harrowing tales of mob fury against certain sections of the people, particularly the communities which are supposed to have inclination towards the RSS and Mahasabha. I have no doubt the Governments concerned must be doing their best to give protection to innocent persons. I invite your attention to the extract from a letter received by me from no less a person than Mr. P. V. Kane, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay [See Enclosure]. I am sure you will do what is necessary to assure the people concerned that Government will do its duty in the matter of protecting them.

With my best regards to you,

Yours sincerely,
M. S. Aney[1]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT FROM LETTER DATED 1 FEBRUARY 1948 FROM MR. P. V. KANE, VICE-CHANCELLOR, BOMBAY UNIVERSITY, TO SHRI M. S. ANEY, GOVERNOR OF BIHAR

The tragic circumstances of Mahatma Gandhi's death are resulting in an intercaste feud. There has been a vendetta by some people and goondas against the Hindu Mahasabha and Brahmans who are members of the Sabha. There have been burnings in several chawls where Brahmans live or where Hindu Sabha members are known to reside. The doors of the Brahman Sabha at Bombay near the Prarthanasamaj were broken open and the clocks were

[1] President, Berar PCC, 1921-30; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1941-43; resigned over Gandhi's fast and Government's refusal to release him; India's representative in Ceylon, 1943-47; member, CA, 1947-48; Governor of Bihar, 1948-52; Lok Sabha member, 1959-66

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struck with stones and pots were taken out on the street and burnt. In other chawls there have been attacks by mobs against Brahmans and there has been firing by the police in several cases and many persons were injured and several killed in these two days. One does not know what is going to happen as to this intercaste feud. Even women have been assaulted and ill-treated. This is a new phase which was not present even during Hindu-Muslim riots.

Unless Government takes strong measures in Bombay and Poona (where also there has been a good deal of arson) there is no knowing how far hatred and vengeance may proceed.

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New Delhi
17 February 1948

My dear Bapuji Aney,

Thank you for your letter of 10 February 1948. The news of these outbreaks of lawlessness [has] distressed me beyond words. I have already made two public appeals on this subject and the provincial Governments have also taken all the necessary precautions. We have also taken over the law and order administration of eight Deccan States. It seems that these outbreaks were provoked by an open expression of pleasure on the part of a section of the people and distribution of sweets on Gandhiji's death.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri M. S. Aney
Governor of Bihar
Government House
Patna

26

Jullundur City
14 February 1948

My dear Panditji,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 11 February 1948.

Our Home Department has been sending regular reports to your Government about the situation in our province following the ban on the RSS. It seems these reports have not been brought

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to your notice, otherwise you would not have felt so much worried about the situation in Amritsar. There is no doubt that some members of the RSS did try to defy the ban in Amritsar and Gurdaspur. But they were immediately arrested. For the last three days there has been absolutely no activity on their part. Our police and the local authorities are quite vigilant and I assure you that no weakness on their part will be tolerated by my Government. So far about 1,200 workers of the RSS have been arrested. In Amritsar alone the number is about 300.

Regarding Rai Bahadur Badri Das, it is true that about two months ago I had a talk with him about his appointment as Vice-Chancellor of the [East] Punjab University. But he has not been appointed to this post. Instead Mr. Justice Teja Singh has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of Punjab University. How can I appoint anybody as Vice-Chancellor of the University or to any other responsible post if he is in any way connected with the RSS? We have not arrested Rai Bahadur Badri Das because he had resigned from the Sangh and also because we thought that this will demoralise the other workers, and some subsequent events have proved that our judgment was right.

I am sorry to find that some people give you entirely wrong reports about the situation in my province and they are unnecessarily worrying you and [wasting] your time. Please rest assured that so long as I am at the helm of affairs I will not allow anything to be done which might lower the prestige of the Congress.

Sincerely yours,
Gopichand Bhargava

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
14 February 1948

My dear Banerji,[1]

I am sending herewith in original a letter which H.M. has received from Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee. Please contact the Chief Commissioner or the DIG at once, and if the sole reason for arresting Captain Keshab Chandra is his treasurership of

[1] ICS; Home Secretary, Union Government; retired as Chairman, Union Public Service Commission

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the Hindu Mahasabha and his Hindu Mahasabha activities, H.M. feels that he should be released at once. Otherwise, the facts may be ascertained and reported to H.M. by this evening.

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar
Private Secretary

R. N. Banerji Esq., ICS
Secretary
Ministry of Home Affairs
Government of India
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

5 Barakhamba Road
New Delhi
14 February 1948

My dear Sardarji,

As you may be aware, the Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha is due to meet this afternoon and tomorrow at Delhi mainly to consider my proposal regarding the future reorientation of the Hindu Mahasabha policy. Meanwhile about eight members of the Working Committee have been arrested. I have of course nothing to say about any arrest which may have been made in connection with Gandhiji's assassination. I believe, however, a large number of people are also being arrested on mere suspicion. One person arrested last night at Delhi was Captain Keshab Chandra, Treasurer, All-India Hindu Mahasabha. He came to Delhi to attend the meeting of the Working Committee. I know from my personal knowledge that he has been most anxious that the policy of the Mahasabha should undergo a radical change and he publicly associated himself with this move while condemning the outrage. He was a signatory to the manifesto issued by several leading members of the Hindu Mahasabha. He also did munificent work for organising relief in the Punjab. I shall be grateful if you will kindly look into his case and if there is no tangible charge against him, permit him to attend the meeting of the Working Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
16 February 1948

My dear Sardarji,

Two of our Bengal members, Mr. N. C. Chatterjee[1] and Mr. D. N. Mukherjee,[2] who came here in connection with the meeting of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha and will be leaving for Calcutta at noon today, would like to meet Captain Keshab Chandra and Mr. Asutosh Lahiri who are now in police custody. If there is no objection to this, may I ask the Chief Commissioner or the Deputy Commissioner to give the necessary permission? Perhaps Shankar may telephone to the officer concerned and he may inform me when and where they should go.

You may have noticed from the papers that the Working Committee has unanimously adopted the resolutions on the lines of the statement I had issued a few days ago. I hope this will help to create a proper atmosphere which will put an end to the present feelings of bitterness and strife. I shall discuss this with you later on.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

29

New Delhi
25 February 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

A question has been raised in connection with the decision to ban volunteer organisations as to what should be done with the Congress Volunteer Organisation. It has been pointed out that it would be illogical to ban other volunteer organisations without banning the Congress Volunteer Organisation. For the time

[1] Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India; President, Hindu Mahasabha; member, Lok Sabha

[2] Member, Bengal Legislative Assembly, 1937

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being, I have issued instructions to leave out Congress volunteer organisations and prohibit the activities of other political and communal volunteer organisations. I should be grateful if you would kindly consider the question of the Congress Volunteer Organisation and let me know what you think about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

30

Government House
Calcutta
6 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Please see the enclosed cutting. The reference to Hindu Mahasabha therein, reporting your alleged attitude, is mischievous and very stupid. I wish we could escape the attention of our friends!

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari[1]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
4 February 1948

India's Deputy Prime Minister during his speech today at the Congress Assembly Party meeting (substantially reported yesterday) strongly denied any differences with the Prime Minister emphasising that the present Cabinet functioned on the principle of joint responsibility. Thus the Prime Minister

[1] Joined Gandhi's satyagraha campaign and non-co-operation movement in 1920; General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1921-22; member, Congress Working Committee, uninterruptedly until 1942; first Premier of Madras after 1937 elections; resigned from Congress in view of differences over Muslim League's claim to Pakistan; assisted Gandhi in talks with Jinnah, 1944; member, Interim Government, 1946-47; Governor of West Bengal, 1947-48; acting Governor-General, June 1948-January 1950; Union Minister without Portfolio, July-December 1950; Minister of Home Affairs, 1950-51; Chief Minister of Madras, 1952-54; founded Swatantra Party in 1959 to challenge "Leftist" policies of Congress

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had ipso facto the resignations of all Members of the Cabinet at all times in his pocket. As a self-respecting man he would not think of continuing even for a minute in the Government had he the least suspicion that he did not enjoy the confidence of his leader.

Referring to the demand for the suppression of Hindu Mahasabha, Sardar Patel is reported to have advised the party meeting that such a course would not have been in consonance with democratic principles. Our draft Constitution had recognised the Muslims as a separate entity and Government could not, therefore, ignore Hindus as such.

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Nagpur
7 February 1948

Revered Sardar Sahib,

The reactions to dear Bapu's death, particularly in the four Marathi-speaking districts of the Congress province of Nagpur have accentuated anti-Brahmin hatred and even Congress-minded persons of non-Brahmin persuasion have taken advantage of this to bring into disrepute Brahmins in the Congress organisation, and particularly those in places of power and authority. It was therefore thought that the best way of combating this tendency was to quit all such places. It was felt that such an act would go a long way in reassuring public opinion and strengthen the Congress as a non-communal national organisation.

This view was put forward and advocated by Shri Dada Dharmadhikari.[1] I generally agreed with this, but counselled that any final step should be taken only after obtaining your advice. Dada's objections to this were (a) that in case you differed and advised against such a course any effect that such action would have had would be completely lost and (b) that, as in any case the question would be finally referred to you and there was never any intention of pressing the resignations against your final judgment, there was not much point in a prior reference to you. The alternative that he put forth was that if I did not join him he would be sending up his own and Shrimati Vimalabai Deshpande's[2] resignation. Besides reducing the moral effect of any such action [this] would have created an invidious distinction amongst our-

[1] A Minister in the Shukla Cabinet
[2] A Minister in the Shukla Cabinet

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selves. Mishraji[1] was consulted, and though he was very strongly opposed to the move he agreed that if the thing was to be done it would have a better colour if it was done by all. As in any case Shri Dada's and Shrimati Vimalabai's resignations were to be delivered I withdrew my objections for the above reasons and joined them.

The resignation letter, signed by four of us, was delivered to Pandit Shukla,[2] but at Mishraji's importunate request and remonstrance it was later withdrawn on the ground that the thing could not remain a secret and its publication would not be in the public interest.

We are therefore where we were before, though not exactly so. I am writing to you to explain under what circumstances I joined Dada Dharmadhikari in the letter of resignation.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
R. K. Patil[3]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

32

New Delhi
9 February 1948

My dear Patil,

Thank you for your letter of 7 February 1948. I am glad you have withdrawn the letter of resignation. It was a wise thing to do. After all, if a handful of people get mad it does not mean that we should give up our posts of duty in a huff.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri R. K. Patil
Minister
Government of the Central Provinces & Berar
Nagpur

1 D. P. Mishra: Joined Congress movement in early twenties; MLA (Central), 1926; Opposition Whip under Motilal Nehru; Home Minister, CP, 1937-39; member, CWC, 1950; VC of Saugar University, 1956-62; Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh, 1963-67; member, Central Parliamentary Board and Congress Working Committee and Treasurer, Ruling Congress

2 Pandit R. S. Shukla: Entered Legislative Council of Central Provinces in 1923 as member of Swaraj Party; Minister of Education, July 1937; Premier, August 1938; Chief Minister of CP after Independence and later of reformed State of Madhya Pradesh until 1956

3 Minister, Planning and Development, Madhya Pradesh; Food Commissioner, Government of India; Member, National Planning Commission

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New Delhi
20 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Some days ago I received the enclosed letter and note from S. S. Khera,[1] Commissioner of Meerut. Khera is one of the good officers of the UP Government. He is straight and honest and efficient but a little liable to emotionalism and therefore sometimes expansive. His note is rather an unusual one for a Government servant to send. But he wrote it, I suppose, because of the shock of Bapu's death. I am sending it to you as it might interest you.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

S. S. KHERA'S NOTE TO THE PRIME MINISTER SOON AFTER GANDHI'S ASSASSINATION

This is not an isolated act by a mad man. It is a dangerous error to regard it as such. It was built up to its event. There was the immediate conspiracy, brought to completion, after the unsuccessful attempt on 20 January by the same persons, Godse and Apte, through the utter ineptitude of the police. Godse and Apte came to Delhi by air on 17 or 18 January. They went back to Bombay after the attempt on the 20th. The police had their full description and even the names of their associates, and had actually in their custody one of their accomplices. Godse and Apte came to Delhi again by air on the 28th or 29th, and the most elementary check would have discovered them. It was not just ineptitude. There is the tragic lack of will to maintain Governmental authority. The most senior officers of Delhi have time and again in recent months been able with impunity, openly and loudly, to criticise and condemn the administration of the neighbouring area of the UP for attempting with some measure of success to maintain law and order, not in terms of the barren graveyard of the East Punjab, but of the stated policy of the Congress Government.

[1] ICS; retired as Cabinet Secretary, Union Government

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New Delhi
21 February 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 February 1948, with which you enclosed a letter and note from Mr. S. S. Khera, Commissioner of Meerut Division.

As you say, it has apparently been written under a great emotional stress and that probably explains the unbalanced outbursts in which it abounds. There are also certain glimpses of the obvious.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

35

New Delhi
20 February 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of the translation of case diaries of officers of the Delhi police who were asked to go to Bombay immediately after the bomb explosion in Birla House on 20 January and effect the arrest of persons who had been implicated by Madan Lal, the culprit. You will notice that they had definite instructions to arrest the persons named by him, that they approached the Bombay police with that request more than once. But the Bombay police felt that all the conspirators should be located and then their arrest should be effected. You will also notice that the Bombay police did attempt to round up these persons, but the latter somehow eluded the attempts of the Bombay police to locate them. On 25 January when the two officers deputed for the purpose finally returned to Delhi and made their report to [T. V.] Sanjevi, the latter sent for Rana, DIG of Police, CID, Bombay, who was at Delhi at the time in connection with the conference of provincial CID chiefs, gave him a copy of Madan

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Lal's statement and informed him of the attempts which had been made by the Delhi police to arrest the conspirators and the reasons for the same. On the 26th Mr. Rana left for Bombay.

2. I myself would not like to create any inter-provincial dispute on this issue, but I thought I should let you know the facts in view of the oft-repeated allegation that efforts had not been made to trace the conspirators named by Madan Lal, particularly Godse who was described by him instead of being named. I thought I would let you know the history of the attempts made by the Delhi police to round them up. The attitude of the Bombay police officers is understandable. There was certainly a grave risk of the other conspirators going underground if only some were arrested even though they could be located. Being wise after the event we might call it at worst an error of judgment, but I feel that even the best of us were liable to fall in that error.

3. I should be glad if you would kindly return to me the enclosure.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

TRANSLATION OF CASE DIARY DATED 21-1-48

Police Station : Tughlak Road, New Delhi.
FIR No. 40 dated 20-1-1948.
Date & Place of occurrence : Birla House, afternoon on 20-1-1948.
U/s 4/5 of the Explosive Act.
Crown Vs. Madan Lal Accused.
Prepared by : Jaswant Singh, DSP, New Delhi
Written at : Bombay.

1. Sir, Reference previous case diaries of this case, I submit that Superintendent of Police, New Delhi, ordered that I and Inspector Mr. Bal Kishan, CID, should reach Bombay today for the investigation of this case by air. He has arranged for the seats by air for Bombay. He further said that in Bombay you should see Mr. Nagarwala, the Deputy Commissioner of Police i.e. Special Branch CID, Bombay, and give him the full facts of this case, who will help you, and in Poona, there is one Mr. Gurtu, Assistant to DIG/CID

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Mr. Nagarwala [who] will give you necessary help; in case Mr. Nagarwala thinks necessary for you to go to Poona, he will depute a special police officer with you.

We left Delhi for Bombay by air.

At the time we reached Bombay city, it is raining. We stayed in Universal National Restaurant, and will see Mr. Nagarwala tomorrow morning. Case Diary prepared.

Jaswant Singh
21-1-1948. DSP

Attested : True translation of C.D. dated 21-1-1948.

Jaswant Singh
DSP

TRANSLATION OF CASE DIARY DATED 22-1-1948

Case FIR. No. 40 dated 20-1-1948.
U/S 4/5 Explosive Act.
Cr. Vs. Madan Lal accused.
Prepared by : DSP Jaswant Singh of New Delhi.
Written at : Bombay

1. Reference Case Diary of yesterday, I with Inspector M. Bal Kishan left for the house of Mr. Nagarwala by a taxi.

2. Reached at the house of Mr. Nagarwala. Mr. Nagarwala met us, and the full story of this case was explained to him. Mr. Nagarwala after hearing the full story of this case said that he had information about this case, and he had a talk with the higher authorities about this case by telephone. He had already deputed his special men everywhere, and for the suspects, about whom he got the information and had also deputed his men to locate them, and he had deputed his men on the railway station. He further stated that you should see him in his office, and we would have further talks there, and he told me that he wanted that no one should know about our arrival in Bombay, and we should not stay in the city. He also said that if the party who is responsible for the case will come to know of our arrival then the whole plan will be smashed, and no arrest will be possible. Further he ordered me to remove my uniform and see him again in mufti in his office.

At this time I with Inspector CID, Delhi, reached CID Office, Bombay, in a taxi, and appeared before Mr. Nagarwala to whom I again gave the facts of the case, and also showed to him a written brief of the statement of Madan Lal accused, with the written footnotes by S.P. New Delhi. It was produced before Mr. Nagarwala, who read it, and kept its extract with him, he returned the original brief, which is attached herewith.

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I again explained the full facts of Karkare before Mr. Nagarwala, and also I told Mr. Nagarwala that Madan Lal accused had stated that one of the accused was the editor of the Agirni or Hindu Rashtarya newspaper, he was of sallow complexion aged 33/34, 5/6" in height and it is not known to him whether he is of Bombay or Poona. Besides these two, I had stated the description of three Maharatas and one Raja Sahib. Their description was explained by me to Mr. Nagarwala. About the editor Hindu Rashtarya or Agirni and Karkare, special request was made that they have been named by their co-accused, therefore, they should be arrested first so that we may be able to get the clue of the others from them.

22-1-1948, 11.30 a.m. : Mr. Nagarwala stated that his information is that there are more persons in this party. This party is of about 25 persons, all are responsible for this conspiracy. Special arrangements for the arrest of Karkare have been made in Bombay and in Poona [and] Ahmednagar. About the other suspects, they have located three or four at present, but our scheme is to first locate all, and then their arrest will be carried out. If at present we will arrest three or four from them, by doing this we will not succeed in the arrest of others.

About Ahmednagar, he said that he will accompany us, when he will get the information, but you should not go there now. He then sent for Mr. Kargaonkar, Inspector CID, Bombay, who came inside his office. He ordered his Inspector to arrange for our lodging at a place where nobody can know about our arrival. He also instructed us not to give our Delhi address in the hotel's register and in our presence, he contacted one police officer on phone at Ahmednagar and also got New Delhi. Immediate trunk call booked, for DIG, CID Poona. He also said that he would first consult the H.M., Bombay, and then he will take further action against the accused.

22-1-1948, 2 p.m. : At this time we reached the house of Inspector Mr. Kargaonkar, CID, Bombay, with our kits, and stayed in one room in the said Inspector's flat.

22-1-1948, 4 p.m. : At this time we reached the CID Office, Bombay, and Inspector, CID, Bombay, said that your presence here is not required; so we returned to his house and reached his house.

22-1-1948, 7.30 p.m. : At this time, Mr. Kargaonkar, Inspector of Police, CID, Bombay, with Deputy Inspector and Sub-Inspector came back to his house and he said that they had located few suspects, and had deputed their police for the other suspects, who are not located as yet. He is definite that they will succeed in tracing all the suspects.

For Karkare and the editor of Agirni or Hindu Rashtarya newspaper, he said that one Inspector of Police from Ahmednagar is coming tomorrow and will come to know about those two and then will arrange for their arrests.

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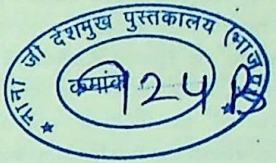
22-1-1948, 8 p.m.: We slept at Inspector CID's Bombay house. Case Diary prepared and kept.

Sd. Jaswant Singh
DSP

Attested : True translation of C.D. dated 22-1-1948.

Jaswant Singh
DSP

TRANSLATION OF CASE DIARY DATED 23-1-1948



FIR No. 40 dated 20-1-1948.
U/S 4/5 Explosive Act, P.S. Tughlak Road.
Writer : DSP Jaswant Singh.
Written at : Bombay.

Sir,

Reference Case Diary dated 22-1-48, I submit that at this time I with Malik Bal Kishan, Inspector, Delhi, and Mr. Kargaonkar, Inspr. CID, Bombay, reached the CID Office, Bombay, and met Mr. Nagarwala who gave lists of passengers who left Bombay for Delhi from 13-1-1948 to 20-1-1948 and said that he was going for an urgent work, he would be coming back within no time and would give further instructions.

I have gone through these statements and nothing fruitful comes to my notice at present.

Mr. Kargaonkar, Inspr. CID, Bombay, informed us that Inspr. of Police from Ahmednagar had arrived and he had been sent back again by the D.C. Mr. Nagarwala with special instruction. Karkare is not there. Inspector of Police, Ahmednagar, has been ordered to search the editor required in this case; CID, Bombay, has also received similar orders about the search of editor of Agirni or Hindu Rashtarya newspaper.

At this time, I enquired about the previous history of Karkare from Inspector of Police, Bombay, and requested him to give me some idea of his information about the culprits of this case.

On this, Inspector CID, Bombay, said that Karkare's full name is V. R. Karkare who is a proprietor of the Deccan Guest House, Ahmednagar. He is a prominent worker of the Hindu Mahasabha and a social worker. He used to go to refugees in Chambor Camp. His connections are with the big leaders of the H.M.S. [Hindu Mahasabha]. The following are his co-accused and associates :

1. Mr. Badge of Poona, a worker of the H.M.S.

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2. Autar Singh, Punjabi Sikh of Amritsar (now proprietor, Sher-Punjab Hotel, Bombay). He is the man who supplies arms and arranges for the collection of arms. He is under arrest and was in jail before this occurrence.

3. Mr. Talwar of Karachi now in Bombay.

4. Mr. Balraj Mehta of Lahore (now Shivaji Park, Bombay).

All the above persons are workers of the H.M.S. and they often work with Karkare in such matters. And the Inspector hesitated to give further details.

23-1-1948, 12-30 p.m. : At this time, D.C., Bombay, arrived in the office, and he said that he is doing his best for the arrest of these suspects, and further remarked that I am not required here at present; when required, he will call me, and he ordered that I should go back to Delhi. At this stage, again a request was made that according to our accused's statement, Karkare and the editor of Agirni or Hindu Rashtarya are named in his statement, and if they are arrested, they should be sent to Delhi. He agreed. Further the D.C. Bombay instructed us that at our arrival in Delhi I should inform the Bombay Police about the further development from the statement of Madan Lal accused.

At this time a brief note on this case with the name and description of the accused wanted in this case was handed over to the Inspector CID, Bombay. A request was made again that he should inform us about the arrest of Karkare and the editor of Agirni and he will arrange to send them to Delhi.

23-1-1948, 3 p.m.: We left Bombay by train.

Sd. Jaswant Singh
DSP

Note: 24-1-1948: Arrived at Delhi. Case Diary prepared and kept 24-1-1948.

Jaswant Singh
DSP

Attested : True translation of C.D. dated 23-1-1948.

Jaswant Singh
DSP

36

11 Windsor Place
New Delhi
21 February 1948

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhaiji,

Yesterday the DIG of Police, Delhi, accompanied by three other police officers, came and saw me at my quarters. I have been under doctor's orders more or less confined to the house

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since I had a heart-attack on the night of 30 January. The IG questioned me about a report which had reached him about some remarks which the Princess of Bharatpur, who has been staying with me, is stated to have made on the night of 30 January. The police interrogated me and later recorded my statement. They also interrogated the Princess of Bharatpur herself and two other ladies and a gentleman who happened to be at my house that evening. In the course of these interrogations, it transpired that Colonel Bhargava, Civil Surgeon, New Delhi, had given them information which has led to this enquiry. I will not enter into the details, as the police have now a complete version and you can send for the papers and judge the matter yourself. I will only say in this letter that I myself and everybody connected with my household [are] terribly upset that any suspicion should have been cast on us. We wish to assure you with all sincerity at our command that we are prepared to clear up our position in any way you consider necessary. We cannot rest content with such a stigma attached to us. Mahatmaji, as I need not assure you, was respected and loved by all of us including my entire family and his loss came to us all as a great shock. I need not talk of this aspect of the matter. What I wish to bring to your notice is the extraordinary behaviour of Col. Bhargava in giving what appears to be a very garbled version of the conversation which he heard at my house when he came to attend on me in his professional capacity. He could have verified this before jumping to conclusions by enquiry at my place. I might say that Col. Bhargava has been known to me and has been a friend of the family for about 17 or 18 years and I think I may claim to have rendered him, his sons and his brother considerable assistance in so many matters. I have always treated him as a friend, but in this case a very small matter seems to have upset him. He came to see me a little after 10.30 on the night of the 30th, but he did not consider that there was anything wrong with my heart. After he went away I became more uncomfortable and a friend of mine sent for a heart specialist, Col. Dhanda, who had never treated me before. Next morning Col. Bhargava came to see me and Col. Dhanda also arrived simultaneously. Col. Bhargava did not like Col. Dhanda having been called in and went away without examining me. He did not come to see me again until a few days ago when, in order not to give him cause for complaint, I specially called him for consultation with Col. Dhanda. Even then he was not affable and a day or two after his visit, he sent me a letter demanding payment of £ 30 which he claimed

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to have been due to him since 1937. He had not claimed this amount before. I enclose herewith a copy of this letter for your kind perusal. I do not wish to make any complaint against Col. Bhargava, but it seems to me that his annoyance at our having called in Dr. Dhanda must have had something to do with the complaint he made.

I might mention that the Princess of Bharatpur has been known to me ever since she was a child and as she is an old friend of the family, I know a great deal about her sympathies and predilections. She never had any connection with any political party and she has not been even on 'talking terms' with her brother, the Maharaja of Bharatpur. She has not visited Bharatpur since 1946 and even then she did not stay with the Maharaja.

I have ventured to lay the bare facts before you as I feel certain that you will not allow harassment of persons who cannot by any stretch of imagination be involved in the dastardly outrage [Gandhi murder]. I have full faith in our Government and will gladly submit to any decision which they may reach.

I would have come and seen you personally but as I am leaving for Cawnpore [Kanpur] on an urgent private business tomorrow, I will solicit an interview on my return about the 27th or 28th.

With apologies for worrying you personally,

Yours sincerely,
J. P. Srivastava[1]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

37

New Delhi
22 February 1948

My dear Sir J. P. Srivastava,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February 1948.

As the matter is under investigation, I should not like to say anything on merits. I would only say this much, that the Intelligence Bureau did not get their information from Col. Bhargava,

[1] Food Member, Central Government, during World War II

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but from independent sources. Your suspicion of Col. Bhargava is, therefore, entirely unfounded.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Sir J. P. Srivastava
11 Windsor Place
New Delhi

38

New Delhi
26 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

You are so terribly busy, and I am pretty well occupied, that I hesitate to add to your work. I feel however that I must tell you what I have had in my mind for some days.

While the investigation about Bapu's assassination by Godse is proceeding here and [in] Bombay and elsewhere, there appears to be a certain lack of real effort in tracing the larger conspiracy. More and more I have come to the conclusion that Bapu's murder was not an isolated business but a part of a much wider campaign organised chiefly by the RSS. A large number of RSS men have been arrested, probably many of them more or less innocent. But a considerable number of their key men are still abroad or underground or even sometimes flourishing in the open. Many of these people are in our offices and in the police. It is hardly possible to keep anything secret from their group. I was told the other day by a responsible police officer that no search could be conducted in secret because previous intimation always reached the parties concerned.

The Delhi police has apparently a goodly number of sympathisers with the RSS. It may not be easy to deal with all of them. But I think something more than has been done can be undertaken. I have little doubt that the RSS organisation is still fairly active in many ways and will hit back when it can. To be complacent about it might lead to fresh disaster. I am told that they have taken to a number of apparently innocent activities and are utilising them to keep their organisation in proper trim.

I do not know what exactly to suggest to you. But I have a feeling of uneasiness about the situation in Delhi specially. I

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think the police and the local authorities have to be kept up to the mark. They have a habit of slackening off after the spurt. What is more dangerous is that a number of them appear to sympathise with the RSS. Hence an impression is created that nothing very effective is being done. Effectiveness does not mean mass arrests but the singling out of people who count and whose potentiality for mischief is great.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

39

New Delhi
27 February 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 26 February 1948 which I received just now.

I have kept myself almost in daily touch with the progress of the investigation regarding Bapu's assassination case. I devote a large part of my evening to discussing with Sanjevi the day's progress and giving instructions to him on any points that arise. All the main accused have given long and detailed statements of their activities. In one case, the statement extends to ninety typed pages. From their statements, it is quite clear that no part of the conspiracy took place in Delhi. The centres of activity were Poona, Bombay, Ahmednagar and Gwalior. Delhi was, of course, the terminating point of their activity, but by no means its centre; nor do they seem to have spent more than a day or two at a time, and that too only twice between 19 and 30 January. It also clearly emerges from these statements that the RSS was not involved in it at all. It was a fanatical wing of the Hindu Mahasabha directly under Savarkar that [hatched] the conspiracy and saw it through. It also appears that the conspiracy was limited to some ten men, of whom all except two have been got hold of. Every bit of these statements is being carefully checked up and verified and scrutinised, and where necessary, followed up. Sanjevi devotes a considerable time every day to it. Senior officers of Bombay and CP are in charge of the investigation. Delhi police hardly comes in the picture.

Of course, it is impossible for us at this stage to publicise any of these things or to say anything publicly about what is

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being done to unearth the conspiracy. Every item of information that is being communicated to us through sources, known and unknown, real, anonymous or pseudonymous, is being investigated. More than 90 per cent of these have been found to be just imagination. Most of these have been directed to the activities of RSS men in various centres. We have followed this up, and except vague allegations that sweets were distributed or joy was expressed, hardly anything of substance has been found in them. After having dealt with these matters at first hand and discussed these matters in detail with Sanjevi and other officers who are in charge of this investigation, including the Public Prosecutor of Bombay, Mr. Pettigarah, who has been advising the investigators on legal points, I have come to the conclusion that the conspiracy of Bapu's assassination was not so wide as is generally assumed, but was restricted to a handful of men who have been his enemies for a very considerable time—the antipathy can be traced right to the time when Bapu went for his talks with Jinnah, when Godse went on a fast and some others of the conspirators went to Wardha to prevent him [Bapu] from going. Of course, his assassination was welcomed by those of the RSS and the Mahasabha who were strongly opposed to his way of thinking and to his policy. But beyond this, I do not think it is possible, on the evidence which has come before us, to implicate any other members of the RSS or the Hindu Mahasabha. The RSS have undoubtedly other sins and crimes to answer for, but not for this one. If you have any time, I would be glad to send to you Sanjevi and Rana, DIG, CID, Bombay, who are here. They could explain to you the whole case as it has emerged from the investigation. They say they will take another ten days or a fortnight, at the end of which the case will be ripe for being placed in the hands of the Public Prosecutor. As soon as the Public Prosecutor is ready, we hope to appoint a Special Judge to try the case in Delhi.

As regards the RSS in Delhi, I am not aware of any prominent men or active workers whom we have left out. We hear all sorts of reports from somebody or the other regarding a certain person being an active member or not. In some cases, on such reports, arrests were made, and we soon found representations coming from Congressmen themselves testifying to their Congress sympathies and anti-RSS views. We had to release them. In other cases, on arrests of RSS people being made on similar information, both we and the Provincial Governments are being accused of rounding up innocent people. In the case of a secret

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organisation like the RSS which has no records of membership, no registers, etc., securing of authentic information whether a particular individual is an active worker or not is rendered a very difficult task. Nevertheless, I am assured that practically all the important workers of RSS in Delhi have been rounded up. Indeed, some knowledgeable people tell me that we have rounded up more than necessary. I have already asked Provincial Governments, including Delhi, to let us know what has been the result of these arrests, how many have been arrested, how many have been released, what has been revealed in searches, etc. As soon as these reports come in, we shall have to consider our next step. If there are any key men who are still at large, I should like to know their names, so that we can follow them up.

I quite realise that police and the local authorities who are in Delhi or elsewhere have an appreciable number of RSS sympathisers. Here again, however, the difficulty is to locate the men. Whenever I have received the least information about the names, and particulars of any RSS men in Government service, I have communicated them to Sanjevi or Mehra. In some cases, Government servants in Delhi have already been arrested for RSS activities. Delhi's quota of RSS arrests compares favourably with that of any other place or province. I doubt, therefore, whether the accusation can be substantiated that Delhi police or local authorities have been inactive on account of RSS sympathies. However, I shall again have a discussion with Mehra on the particular problems which you have mentioned and see what further action could be taken.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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40

New Delhi
27 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Lady Cripps sent me a copy of Stafford Cripp's[1] speech on Gandhiji for you. I enclose this.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

17 February 1948

Sir Stafford Cripps, Chancellor of the Exchequer, at a Service of Intercession for the people of India, in Westminster Abbey this afternoon, spoke of Mahatma Gandhi in the following words:

This afternoon I have been asked to say a few words to you about Mahatma Gandhi.

He started life in the way that any of us might have started. He studied to become a lawyer and in the course of those studies he became a student of the Middle Temple here in London, where he was later qualified by being called to the Bar. In his later years he looked back on those days with no regret and often spoke to me about them. He was proud of his legal qualifications and used to recount the early triumphs that he had when he went to practise in South Africa.

It was there first that he came into contact in an intimate way with the difficulties of his own people. He became the Indians' and the poor man's lawyer and had his mind strengthened in the will and the purpose of leading his people out of their bondage into freedom.

Already his deep religious conviction of non-violence had taken shape, based upon the policy pursued in the great days of Hinduism in India.

1 MP (Lab.) for Bristol East; Lord Privy Seal and Leader of House of Commons, February 1942, known for Cripps proposals in 1942; member, British Cabinet Mission, 1946

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Non-violence for him was not a negative policy, it was much more than that. It was the determination that the power of love should triumph, a determination based upon a deep and unshakable belief in that power. It was by that power of love that he was determined to liberate his country and for that purpose he returned to India and spent many years walking up and down its length and breadth preaching his gospel of freedom through love and non-violence.

He never took the view that he must divorce his religion from his every-day life. Religion was his life and his life was religion. When he saw injustice or when he thought the time ripe for some advance of his people towards their freedom he applied his beliefs by action. He knew as no other man perhaps has ever known the spirit and character of the Indian people of all races and creeds. He understood how self-sacrifice appealed to them and he made his own self-sacrifice the central feature of all his actions. He lived the simplest of lives surrounded by an ever-growing band of devoted followers. His food, his clothing, his lodgings were all of the simplest.

He was no simple mystic; combined with his religious outlook was his lawyer-trained mind, quick and apt in reasoning. He was a formidable opponent in argument and would often take up the attitude that his views and the policy he was advocating had come to him in his meditations from God and then no reasoning upon earth could make him depart from them. He knew he was right. It was by prayer and meditation that his mind was often made up and not by reasoning with his fellowmen.

He stood out head and shoulders above all his contemporaries as one who believed and who fearlessly put his beliefs into practice. I know of no other man in our time or indeed in recent history who so fully and convincingly demonstrated the power of the spirit over material things.

It was in a supreme effort to heal the differences between Hindu, Mussulman and Sikh that he was engaged at the time of his death. It was the greatest task that he had ever undertaken, and in it he had already had a large measure of success. Almost alone he quelled the disturbances in Bengal which but for the force of his character and teaching would undoubtedly have led to disasters as serious as those in the Punjab.

His attitude to the British as individuals was always one of friendliness and even so far as that somewhat impersonal entity the British people he had no wishes except for their happiness.

I certainly always found him a good and faithful friend upon whose word I could rely.

The fact that he resisted—by his policy of non-co-operation—the British-controlled Indian Government was the natural and I would say proper reaction of a keen Indian nationalist bent upon winning the freedom of his people by non-violent means.

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His passage from us is a loss to all the world, for where can we find today the leaders who are able to emphasise by their own life and actions the overpowering force of love in solving our difficulties?

No words could perhaps better sum up his spirit than those of Thomas -a-Kempis.

"Love feels no burdens, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility; for it thinks all things lawful for itself and all things possible.

"It is therefore able to undertake all things and it completes many things and brings them to a conclusion where he who does not love faints and lies down. . . ."

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New Delhi
28 February 1948

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

Thank you for your very kind invitation to visit Gwalior. I shall be delighted to avail myself of it, but for the present, owing to the Assembly session, I can absent myself from Delhi during week-ends only. The next too week-ends are already booked. I shall try my best to fix up a programme after that and will give you as much advance notice as possible. Provisionally, 20 and 21 March would seem possible.

I am also very glad to know that Your Highness has made a generous donation of Rs. 10 lakhs for Gandhiji's Memorial Fund. I am sure this mark of your reverence to Gandhiji would be deeply appreciated not only in your State, but throughout the country.

By now you must have heard how deeply involved in this tragedy some of the Hindu Mahasabha circles in Gwalior are. Tongues are already wagging about the alleged part which Your Highness and the State have taken in promoting Mahasabha activities in the State. People refer to the contribution of Rs. 25,000 and the visit of Dr. [N. B.] Khare.[1] It is, therefore, fortunate that you withdrew yourself in time from this embarrassing situation. Otherwise, I am afraid you would have found yourself in deep waters. It emphasises how cautious one has to be in dealing with public movements, for, a seemingly innocent organisation or

[1] Chief Minister, Congress Ministry in Central Province in 1937-38; resigned from Congress when he was removed from office by the party High Command; member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1943-46; Prime Minister, Alwar State, 1947-48; President, Hindu Mahasabha, 1949-50

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movement might one day get involved in activities gravely prejudicial to the State and the community.

I hope the popular representatives to whom you have now entrusted most of your cares of State are proving themselves up to the responsibilities which have devolved on them. In any case, Your Highness must be feeling the satisfaction of having done your duty by the people. It is now for the latter to prove themselves worthy of your trust and confidence.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Capt. H. H. Maharaja Sir George
Jivaji Rao Scindia Bahadur
Maharaja of Gwalior
Gwalior

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Samudra Mahal
Worli
Bombay
4 March 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have to acknowledge with thanks your letter of 28 February 1948 in which you have so kindly accepted my invitation to visit Gwalior. I am informed by Mr. [J. N.] Sahni,[1] who met you on my behalf on 1 March 1948, that in view of what he explained to you some week-end dates in the middle of April will suit your convenience. I am grateful for your having agreed to this alteration in dates, knowing how very busy you are. I shall eagerly look forward to this visit in April.

I was sincerely touched by the very kind reference made by you to my feelings of reverence for Mahatma Gandhi.

I have also read with the greatest consideration the sincere words of advice contained in the last paragraph of your letter. Ever since I have come in contact with you I have looked upon you as an elder whose advice I sincerely cherish. I know that your words are inspired by fatherly interest in my welfare. Please again accept my assurance that in the difficult days that are ahead I shall always look forward to receiving similar guidance and good advice from you.

[1] Journalist of Delhi

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With kindest regards,

Your very sincerely,
J. M. Scindia

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
4 May 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I was very glad to know from Dr. [B.C.] Roy[1] that you were feeling better. I hope the change will bring about rapid improvement. It is terribly hot at Delhi. I went to see my daughter at Kasauli during the week-end. She is steadily improving.

I wrote to you (and also spoke to Shankar) about the detention of persons connected with the Mahasabha. Those who are suspected of complicity in the outrage on Gandhiji will no doubt be put up for trial. I understand Savarkar's name is being mentioned in this connection. I do not know what evidence has been found against him. I have not the least doubt that you will satisfy yourself that nothing is done which may give rise to the suggestion later on that he was being prosecuted on account of his political convictions. I hope the records will be placed before you before any decision is taken. His sacrifices and suffering in the past have been considerable and unless there is some positive proof against him, he should not, at this age, be subjected to a charge of conspiracy to commit murder. I leave the matter to your decision.

I am anxious to have a meeting of the All-India Working Committee and the All-India Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha convened some time in May, so that our future policy and programme may be discussed and decided upon. You have always appreciated my own delicate position in the matter. I hope by now sufficient evidence has been placed before Government to show that the Mahasabha as an organization has had nothing to do with the murder. I have always felt that it is only a handful of persons in Poona who might have been members of the conspiracy. But there is a large section of people amongst the Mahasabhaites including many in Poona who have always been against the

1 Congress stalwart in Bengal; VC, Calcutta University, 1942-44 and later President, Jadavpur University; Prime Minister and later Chief Minister, West Bengal

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activities of this small group. It will be a blunder not to isolate this group from the rest which is the vast majority. If members outside the group are continued to be kept in detention for an indefinite period, unnecessary complications will arise.

In Delhi, several persons are now being detained including Asutosh Lahiri, Mahant Digbijoy Nath, Professor Ram Singh and Deshpande. The last three are also being tried for some speeches which were made at a public meeting in Delhi shortly before Gandhiji's assassination. They were also previously detained under the Public Security Act. Later on this had lapsed and was not renewed. They were simply treated as under-trial prisoners whose applications for bail were refused by the local Magistrate. The High Court has, however, granted bail to all of them. As soon as they were let out on bail, they were re-arrested under the Public Security Act and put back in prison. This obviously is a most unfortunate situation. The order under the Public Security Act was not continued against them and this should not have been renewed merely to nullify the directions of the High Court. I am told it may be undesirable to allow them to remain in Delhi so long as Godse's trial continues. If that is so, they may be asked to remain away from Delhi. I do not know what will happen with regard to their case which perhaps will be postponed automatically.

I hope you will be good enough to allow facilities to all members of the Working Committee and the All-India Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha to attend the meetings unless they are implicated in the murder trial.

The future of the RSS workers has also to be settled. In view of the great complications which may arise in connection with Hyderabad and Kashmir, it is desirable that we should be able to create an atmosphere of confidence and security amongst all sections of the people provided we are satisfied that by a general order of release we are not jeopardising the course of law and order. I have suggested that all cases of persons who are detained without trial should be placed before a High Court judge who should go through the evidence, give a chance to the persons concerned to make their statements and then advise Government as to whether there is sufficient justification to continue their detention. This will satisfy public opinion that no one is being detained without fullest possible enquiry and justification.

I understand your secretary is going to Mussoorie tomorrow. I am giving this letter to him, and I hope you will give him

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such directions as you think fit to meet the points that I have raised in the letter.

There are several important matters which are coming before the Cabinet. Your absence is very keenly felt. I see no reason why a meeting of the Cabinet may not be held at Mussoorie once or twice a month to have the benefit of your advice and guidance. This is subject to doctors allowing such a course of action to be taken.

With regard to one matter, viz. appointment of a Cabinet Co-ordination Committee, I shall make the suggestion at today's meeting. I am told you have already communicated your desire to the Prime Minister that this matter may be postponed until you have further considered the details.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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Camp Birla House
Mussoorie
6 May 1948

My dear Syama Prasad,

Thank you for your letter of 4 May delivered to me by Banerji. I am glad to know that your daughter is steadily improving and hope that the improvement will be maintained.

2. As regards Savarkar, the Advocate-General of Bombay, who is in charge of the case, and other legal advisers and investigating officers met me at a conference in Delhi before I came here. I told them, quite clearly, that the question of inclusion of Savarkar must be approached purely from a legal and judicial standpoint and political considerations should not be imported into the matter. My instructions were quite definite and beyond doubt and I am sure they will be acted upon. I have also told them that, if they come to the view that Savarkar should be included, the papers should be placed before me before action is taken. This is, of course, in so far as the question of guilt is concerned from the point of view of law and justice. Morally, it is possible that one's conviction may be the other way about.

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3. I quite agree with you that the Hindu Mahasabha, as an organisation, was not concerned in the conspiracy that led to Gandhiji's murder; but at the same time, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that an appreciable number of the members of the Mahasabha gloated over the tragedy and distributed sweets. On this matter, reliable reports have come to us from all parts of the country. Further, militant communalism, which was preached until only a few months ago by many spokesmen of the Mahasabha, including men like Mahant Digbijoy Nath, Prof. Ram Singh and Deshpande, could not but be regarded as a danger to public security. The same would apply to the RSS, with the additional danger inherent in an organisation run in secret on military or semi-military lines. Nevertheless, we have already decided upon a policy of gradual releases and more than 50 per cent of those originally detained have already been released in accordance with that policy. It could perhaps be safely said now that a large majority of those who continue to be detained, consists of men whose release would be a danger to public security or would lead to a resuscitation of the activities which we have banned. In the remaining three months, however, it may be possible, if the situation in the country remains satisfactory, to space out their releases. I should add that we have already received rather disquieting reports of the revival of those activities in some form or the other. In any case, as you probably know, none of the detained persons can be kept for a period longer than six months. I shall, however, see what further steps we can take to improve the present atmosphere in the country.

4. As regards Mahant Digbijoy Nath, Prof. Ram Singh and Deshpande, they made very nasty speeches on 27 January for which they are being put on trial. Their release at this particular juncture, when the Hindu Mahasabha at Delhi has passed a resolution contrary to the advice of the Working Committee of the Mahasabha, and reports are being received of revival of communal activities, would be fraught with considerable risk. As far as I am aware, the order of detention has nothing to do with Godse's trial. I should add that Deshpande, before his Delhi speech, indulged in a very poisonous outburst in Patna. There is no indication that any of them are wiser by experience.

5. As regards convening a meeting of the Working Committee and the All-India Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha, I would advise you to hold it at a place other than Delhi. Already your local committee has challenged the central body. The

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atmosphere in Delhi has now somewhat deteriorated. I am very sorry, however, that it will not be possible for me to advise Provincial Governments to release any of the detenus in order to attend the deliberations of your committees.

6. I am feeling much better and I am sure if you could come here a change will do you some good. We could then discuss these and other important matters when we meet.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

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New Delhi
7 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to Ghanshyamdas Birla.[1] I am being pressed continuously on this matter and I doubt very much if the agitation will go down by any lapse of time.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Camp Birla House
Mussoorie

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
7 May 1948

My dear Ghanshyamdasji,

You know that ever since Bapu's death there has been a strong and persistent agitation about Birla House in New Delhi. Throughout the Assembly

[1] Leading industrialist; MLA (Central), resigned in protest against legislation for imperial preference in 1930; President, Indian Chamber of Commerce, 1924; President, FICCI, 1929

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session, I received requisitions from over a hundred members of the Assembly and questions were asked at our party meetings. This matter was raised again and again and there was almost a unanimous sense of our members that Birla House, because the tragedy occurred there, should belong to the nation. I did not think this was the correct approach to this problem and I tried my utmost, with a great deal of success, to prevent the question being raised in the House. I promised that I would consult you and some of my colleagues.

The matter is obviously a delicate one and I can quite appreciate your feelings about it. I realise also that Bapu would not have liked you to be inconvenienced in any way. Nevertheless it is true that there is a very strong feeling in this matter and that feeling does not pay too much attention to personal considerations. I appreciate that feeling myself and can understand that. But for my part I would not like that feeling to induce us to take any action contrary to your wishes in the matter.

It is clear, however, that the feeling will continue and will be a constant source of embarrassment to all of us. I have given careful thought to this matter and wanted to discuss it with you, but unfortunately I have found no occasion to do so.

I am now writing to you to put forward a proposal for your consideration. I might add that this particular proposal has not been mentioned in the Congress Party in the Assembly or to anyone else except to two or three persons. The proposal is that Birla House, that is, the entire building should not be touched and should remain in your personal use. But the place in the garden where Bapu used to have his prayer meetings and the place where he was shot might be separated from the House and the rest of the garden and used as a memorial or a place where people could visit. It could be left more or less as it is, as it would be a pity to change it. Some minor alterations might be necessary, and the spot where Bapu was shot down might be clearly indicated by a small pillar or column three feet high. This area might be separated from the main house and grounds and connected separately with the public road. Exactly where the line of demarcation should come can be considered later. The first question to be decided is whether you would wish some such thing to be done.

I have long hesitated to write to you on this subject, but I feel that I must do so now and clear up, if possible, this matter. I shall be grateful to you if you will kindly let me have your views about this suggestion.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Ghanshyamdas Birla
Birla House
New Delhi

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MR. G. D. BIRLA'S REPLY TO MR. NEHRU'S LETTER

12 May 1948

My dear Jawaharlalji,

Many thanks for your kind letter of 7 May about Birla House. I need hardly say how much I appreciate, and how grateful I am for the kind thought and consideration which prompted you to consult my wishes in the matter.

In a sense a decision on this question is for me quite an easy one. As I told Sardarji and as, I believe, he has told you already, I am entirely at your or his disposal. Either of you has merely to give the word and you will not find me hesitant to comply despite my undoubted and deep sentimental attachment to the house. Nevertheless, I should not be human if I did not have an emotional approach to the question. From what I say below you will realise that my attachment is not confined to personal and family associations only, but far transcends those comparatively insignificant limit and encompasses those valuable contacts and memories of public life which have become a part of my being and the divorce from which would certainly mean a wrench too terrible to contemplate.

Bapu came for the first time to occupy this house in 1932. Except for a short period when he stayed at the Harijan Colony or the Bhangi Colony, he consistently stayed in this house. Malviyaji too from time to time occupied this house for many years. Sardarji too honoured me with his stay for the last few years off and on. I had the privilege also of acting as a host to many other leaders including Rajendra Babu, Pantji, Bhulabhai, Munshiji,[1] Shankarrao Deoji,[2] Balasaheb Kher[3] and others. And I had also the proud privilege of having you too as my guest for a few days.

[1] K. M. Munshi: Started political career as joint editor of Young India, 1915; elected member of Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1927; AICC member, 1930-36; Home Minister (Bombay), 1937-39; member, CA, 1946-50; in between Agent-General, Government of India in Hyderabad, 1948; Central Food Minister; Governor of UP; Founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay

[2] Congress leader from Maharashtra; joined non-co-operation movement in 1920; member, AICC and Working Committee of Congress; Chairman, Reception Committee, Faizpur Congress, 1936; member of CA from Bombay

[3] B. G. Kher: Popularly known as Balasaheb Kher; Solicitor; entered politics in 1922; Secretary of Swaraj Party and of Bardoli Satyagraha Inquiry Committee; emerged on national scene in 1937 when Sardar Patel selected him in preference to K. F. Nariman as leader, Bombay Legislature Congress party; became first Premier of Bombay; later High Commissioner in London

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Many important political decisions of far-reaching consequence have been taken in this house, which, undoubtedly, has added to its importance and its historical value. Many important meetings of the Working Committee were held in this house and the first meeting of the Congress Cabinet was held in this house immediately the Congress assumed power in 1946. I have passed the best part of my life in this house where I have from my youth reached now the stage of declining age. Every tree in the house is planted and nursed under my care. I have seen the trees growing, blossoming and giving fruits. I know the individual history of each tree. The garden, the rose-beds and the flower-beds were designed and laid by me which naturally became a part of my limbs.

The house has thus become for me a store-house of memories and recollections which constitute for me a book into which I can delve deep to recall, with pride, with deep emotion, with a sense of glory and with profound sentiment, a past that has gone to build up every fibre of my frail body and every tissue of my mind. The man in the street may not appreciate this aspect of the case, but I am very gratified to learn that both you and Sardarji are fully cognisant of it. Indeed it is already clear to me from your letter that that recognition has caused you not a little embarrassment in dealing with the pressure which has been exerted on you from more than one quarter.

Indeed some of them, among whom I can count some legislators and some who profess to be my friends, went to such extreme as to suggest compulsory acquisitioning of the house. And with compensation if necessary. They little seemed to make any allowance for the nobility of human nature which would shun and spurn any idea of reducing this matter into an ordinary market transaction or to give even a moment's thought to the fact that thereby they were making the memory of a great soul cheap and trash. And coming to the personal aspect of it, I do not think they could have heaped a greater insult on, and done a more grievous wrong to, one who, to the best of his lights, served the Great Master for 32 years than to suggest that its value to him could be measured in terms of filthy lucre.

I hope I have said enough to open out my heart to you on this subject. It is for you to assess the various factors involved. You have also referred to Bapu's feelings. It is for you and the nation to judge whether a fitting memorial could be raised to him by doing violence to these feelings. I am quite prepared to subordinate my own sentiments and attachments to your commands and if you feel that the interests of the nation demand that I should leave the house and the premises, believe me, I would not waste a moment in complying with your wish. How could it be otherwise, for I have throughout believed that I belong to the nation? But I would beg of you not to entertain even for a moment any thought of dissecting the premises. One might ask one to cut one's own child into two and give up one piece and

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retain the other! The house and the premises as a whole treasure Bapu's sacred memory and I would prefer that the whole rather than a part remains an object of hallowed memory.

Finally let me once again express to you my gratitude for the opportunity you have given to me to express my thought and feelings on the matter and the assurance that whatever decision you will take will find from me instant compliance.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Ghanshyamdas Birla

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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Mussoorie
13 May 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 7 May 1948 with which you enclosed a copy of your letter to Ghanshyamdas.

As you know, I hold very strong views on this matter. I feel that morally we would be quite wrong in yielding to pressure. No amount of pressure can make what is morally unjust and unfair, right and proper. If, therefore, we are convinced that the public outcry and clamour are misconceived and wrong, it is our duty to say so and not to yield to such pressure. I myself feel that this public clamour would never have attained these dimensions if we had been bold enough to give a correct lead by making known our opinion publicly to the people. I was told that at the Wardha meeting Vinoba Bhaveji,[1] Kishorelal Mashruwala[2] and others asked Rajen Babu to address individual letters to our Assembly Party members against the proposal to ask Ghanshyamdas to give up the house. Rajen Babu agreed to do so, but unfortunately no letter issued, with the result that the movement gathered momentum. I asked Rajen Babu, when he came here, about this, and he said he forgot to send the letter. Nor can I see how, in the face of our clear conviction that Bapu would never have put up with this idea, we can take over the house, as

1 Gandhian who pioneered bhoodan (land gift) movement
2 Exponent of Gandhian philosophy; editor, Young India and Harijan; member, Zakir Husain Committee on Basic Education

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it were as a memorial to Bapu, or as some might like to say as a reminder to the nation of the tragedy that overtook it. It would be a strange way of doing things if we base a memorial to a great soul on something which would displease the soul most grievously and affect it most painfully. Personally, I cannot conceive of a more objectionable way of perpetuating Bapu's memory or of bequeathing to the nation and to posterity a reminder of that great tragedy.

I have known Ghanshyamdas through Bapu for more than 25 years. The relations between Bapu and him were those of father and son; he had a spiritual bond with him which Bapu fully recognised and Ghanshyamdas maintained to the full and to the very end. But never throughout our long connections has he taken any undue advantage of these ties or exploited them. He is a man of honourable character and straightforward views in life. Despite the calumny indulged in by some malignantly disposed persons, I am quite prepared to say that his association with both of us has been above reproach and entirely unselfish. Had it been otherwise, both Bapu and myself would have been the last persons to have spared him. It is, therefore, impossible for me to be a party to the proposal which, in my opinion, involves violence of the worst kind to the feelings of both Ghanshyamdas and Bapu.

I have, therefore, no doubt that the right and proper course for us is to hold firmly and strongly to our innermost convictions and resist the pressure for depriving Ghanshyamdas of his house. But for my very close and intimate connections with him, I would certainly have spoken out publicly long ago. On account of that handicap, therefore, I can only communicate to you my views for consideration. I hope you will reconsider the matter and reach that conclusion, which I feel is inevitable, and which alone, I am convinced, would prevent the perpetration of a great injustice and a grievous wrong. Should you, however, feel that we must yield to public pressure, I would suggest that before we go any further we should be clear in our own mind as to what we propose to do with the house and premises, and whether it should be taken over by Government or by a non-official trust, etc. You must not lose sight of the fact that if the house is to be taken over, it should be maintained in its present condition and it would cost—whatever authority takes it over—five to six thousand rupees a month in maintenance, etc. We should also be careful in deciding upon the use to which we are going to put this

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house and how we can implement and carry out the object which we might set before us.

Further, I feel that if we take the house over, we should at least in all decency give Ghanshyamdas a suitable alternative site, for which he will gladly pay an adequate price, where he could build a house for himself in Delhi. It would, in my opinion, be adding insult to injury if we took from him this house and left him as it were on the streets. Through many years of valuable contacts with men, prominent in business and public life, he has established for himself a position of a host to so many prominent personalities. It would be a great blow to him and his prestige and standing in public life if we rendered him incapable of discharging these obligations. I would, therefore, suggest that if we take over the house we should give him full facilities to resettle on another suitable site, making full allowance for his public and private needs.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
20 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter dated 13 May about Ghanshyamdas Birla's House. You will notice that what I wrote to Ghanshyamdas referred not to his house as such but to the prayer ground where Bapu used to hold his meetings and where he was shot. This can easily be separated from the house without any damage to it. I should like your opinion about this particular matter.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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Mussoorie
14 May 1948

My dear Rajaji,

I am sending herewith copies of correspondence between Jawaharlal, Ghanshyamdas and myself about Birla House. I am very distressed at the attitude of Devadas[1] on this matter. He does not seem to realise that in that attitude he is going entirely against Bapu's feelings.

If you agree with the line which I have taken, I suggest that you write both to Jawaharlal and Rajen Babu and also suggest to them that in this matter it is for us to give the lead to the public and that we should not fight shy of doing so.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Governor of West Bengal
Government House
New Delhi

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Government House
Darjeeling
18 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter dated 14th and enclosures about Birla House. I agree with you and Jawaharlalji that we should not seek to make a memorial of Birla House simply because Godse chose to kill Bapu in that place. The most important places for conservation and development as memorials are where Bapu worked, namely, Sabarmati Ashram and Sevagram Ashram. Men and women should be made to turn to these spots for renewing their memory

[1] Youngest son of Mahatma Gandhi; Managing Editor, Hindustan Times, New Delhi; assisted father on journal Young India; twice President, Indian and Eastern Newspapers Society and All-India Newspaper Editors Conference

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of Bapu. Perhaps also Valmiki Mandir in Delhi should be attended to in this respect.

The place where Bapu lost his life cannot but continue to be a spot attracting visits from devotees, tourists and others. It cannot be simply maintained and regulated on a basis of private licence and something will have to be done to provide public access to it without disturbing the ownership of the house or any part of it. I therefore feel that more attention should be paid to the suggestion made by Jawaharlalji in the penultimate paragraph of his letter to Ghanshyamdas. I am not sure that Ghanshyamdas is right in violently objecting to "any thought of dissecting the premises." The proposal deserves more dispassionate consideration unless we feel that the spot of the tragedy may be forgotten in favour of the place where his body was cremated. I wonder if this is practicable. I am not writing to Jawaharlalji yet. I should like you to think about this aspect of the matter and, if you approve, to see if you might advise Ghanshyamdas on those lines.

I agree with you that whatever may be our decision, we should put it before the public on our own responsibility and not leave Ghanshyamdas to fight the agitators. Devadas is much distressed at my refusal to support him.

Yours affectionately,
Rajaji

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

50

Dehra Dun
3 June 1948

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your letter of 18 May 1948. Jawaharlal came to Mussoorie on the 25th and we had a discussion. Ghanshyamdas took the position that if Jawaharlal felt that it was the right course to separate the premises from Birla House, he would gladly comply with Jawaharlal's wishes. That means that the proposal which he made has been accepted by Ghanshyamdas.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Darjeeling

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TELEGRAM

Wardhaganj
26 June 1948

Sardar Patel
Dehra Dun

FORTNIGHT AGO MANILAL GANDHI'S[1] WIRE TO EFFECT DEVADAS INFORMED HIM INDIA GOVERNMENT DECIDED NO ASHES BE SENT SOUTH AFRICA OWING ITS HOSTILITY TOWARDS INDIANS. MANILAL [wires] THAT LATER DISCOVERED SORABJI[2] GOT ASHES. HE ASKED ME PREVENT DOING SO. BUT SORABJI HAD LEFT BY THEN. NOT KNOWING ANYTHING FORWARDED COPY MANILAL'S WIRE JAWAHARLALJI TO DO NEEDFUL. NO REPLY. MANILAL WIRES TODAY HE WIRED SORABJI ARRANGE PRIVATE IMMERSION. SORABJI NOT HEEDING HAS ARRANGED PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION. PEOPLE RESPOND. MANILAL UNWILLING PARTICIPATE IN VIEW INDIAN [government's] DECISION [and] SEEKS MY ADVICE. I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE WHAT IS INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. SINCE ASHES GIVEN CONSIDER NON-PARTICIPATION NOT IN INTEREST INDIANS AT THIS STAGE BUT REQUEST YOU ADVISE PROPERLY IF POSSIBLE DIRECTLY PHOENIX. CEREMONY FIXED MONDAY.

KISHORELAL

52

TELEGRAM

Dehra Dun
27 June 1948

Kishorelal Mashruwala
Wardha CP

YOUR TELEGRAM JUST RECEIVED. FOLLOWING CABLE SENT TO MANILAL GANDHI. BEGINS YOUR CABLE TO KISHORELAL JUST RECEIVED NON-PARTICIPATION AT THIS STAGE UNWISE AND NOT IN INDIANS' INTERESTS ENDS.

VALLABHBHAI

[1] Third son of Mahatma Gandhi who stayed in South Africa to continue his father's mission

[2] A prominent Indian settled in South Africa

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Secretariat
Bombay
26 May 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I received your letter of 22 May. I have shown it to and discussed it with Morarji [Desai].[1] I am sorry to learn that our policy regarding the treatment of the offences committed in the Deccan after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi has not met with your approval. As I had no idea that the action taken by us would be misunderstood by you, I did not give you the reasons for taking this line of action.

It will perhaps be not out of place to describe the background of these incidents. As you know, for many years past there has been a strong feeling of enmity between Brahmins and non-Brahmins in Maharashtra on account of (among other reasons) the selfishness and clannish intrigue of a section of Brahmins. From the time of the Peshwas power has, due to several reasons, been concentrated in the hands of Brahmins and the non-Brahmins have been feeling severely their inferior position in spite of their majority. The old non-Brahmin movement was carried on intensely on communal lines and accentuated the hatred of non-Brahmins towards Brahmins, who by their own communal outlook, combined with a superiority complex, brought about a state of affairs which was bound to be resented by the non-Brahmins, whose political consciousness was growing. The non-Brahmin movement failed to prosper as it had wrong and selfish leadership based on unhealthy principles, and the non-Brahmins began to join the Congress in large numbers while the Brahmins joined the Hindu Mahasabha, which became more vocal and aggressive after its leadership had gone into the hands of Savarkar. The Hindu Mahasabha and RSS membership consisted very largely of Konkanastha Brahmins, who day in and day out preached hatred against the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi during the

1 PCS, Bombay; resigned in 1930 to join civil disobedience movement; Minister, Bombay Government, 1937-39; Home Minister, 1946-52; Chief Minister, 1952-56; thereafter Central Minister of Commerce and Industry and later Finance Minister; resigned under Kamaraj Plan, 1963; Deputy Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi's Cabinet, 1967-69

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last few years. Hindu-Muslim relations last year made the Mahasabha preaching more popular and many Congressmen also got affected by the communal virus. The atmosphere of hatred against the Congress and Mahatma sought to be created by the Hindu Mahasabha culminated in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi at the hands of a few Maharashtrians. This created a sense of shame and anger in Maharashtra and some members of the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS behaved in such a peculiar manner before and after the tragic event that many people in Bombay, Poona, Satara, Belgaum and the adjacent States lost their balance completely and, swayed by a feeling of revenge against the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS Brahmins, committed acts of arson, looting and murder against persons whom they considered responsible for the cult of the Mahasabha. The areas in which these offences were committed are areas where people are noted for their violent temperament. Even as a whole, Maharashtra failed to imbibe or to be substantially affected by the non-violent spirit of Mahatma Gandhi's movement. These areas were noted for the sabotage movement in 1942-44 and the fact that these deeds were praised by many of our own leaders left a very wrong psychological effect on the people, who have been temperamentally violent for years. I would earnestly request you not to consider for a moment that I am describing this background as any justification for these offences. I did not approve of even "the patriotic and heroic actions" of the 1942 saboteurs and could not for a moment approve of or have any consideration for the offenders of 1948. We took the strongest steps possible and succeeded in getting the situation under control in a short time. Hundreds of people were rounded up and cases were promptly registered and investigated. Soon after the events, the arrests and the strong attitude of Government were bitterly criticised by a section of Congressmen which was in authority in the Provincial Congress Committee of Maharashtra, and when the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee met recently to take stock of the situation, the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee not only did not condemn in clear terms the happenings but wanted a sympathetic attitude to be taken as regards the accused persons. Shri [N. V.] Gadgil,[1] who took a prominent part in the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee deliberations, supported this attitude of compromise.

[1] N. V. Gadgil: Secretary and later President of Congress Committee, Poona; MLA (Central), 1934; party whip in Central Legislative Assembly till made Minister in Nehru Cabinet in August 1947; Governor of Punjab

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On the other side, the tension between Brahmins and non-Brahmins did not ease and it was very difficult to get evidence against the offenders on account of fear of future reprisals. This being so, there were not very bright chances for securing a conviction in cases of arson and looting and even murder. As these actions were a result of mass action, it was necessary to make the masses realise the enormity of their action. This would be possible only if many of the persons responsible for these actions could be convicted and punished severely. Because of want of courage to give evidence this did not seem likely. Three cases which were taken to court were acquitted. This had a bad effect. Even if convictions could be secured, this would have resulted in perpetuating the tension and bad relations, and Brahmins would not perhaps have been able to get courage to live in villages in future, especially as some non-Brahmin leaders like Messrs Jedhe and [Shankarrao] More preached that the actions were justified and that the Hindu Mahasabha people deserved all that they got.

We could have disregarded the latter contingency in order to set a severe example. The possibility of large-scale acquittals on account of want of evidence had, however, to be taken into consideration and it minimised the chances of setting an example for the future by severe punishments. On the contrary, persons who would be free as a result of acquittals would get a chance to be heroes and become a greater menace for the future.

We, therefore, considered whether it would not be possible to make the people repent and punish themselves to some extent, and came to the conclusion that if we took the course that we have taken it would be possible to make the people who had committed these acts as a result of mass hysteria admit their guilt and repent, and create an atmosphere of goodwill in the villages by helping the sufferers to rebuild their houses according to their capacities.

This was also the view of the people who have stood by valiantly against the Jedhe-More group, and it has also enabled us to bring back sanity in the parts concerned by strengthening the hands of these people. This course is also likely to strengthen the chances of getting proper evidence for the remaining cases.

There was no idea of making a compromise or showing sympathy towards anybody in this attitude. The step was taken only on account of the stark realities of the peculiar situation of the parts affected and also for considerations of maximum effective action.

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I have just met Mr. Babasaheb Shinde, MLA, and Mr. D. K. Gosavi, MLA, for Satara, and they agree that if we did not wish to make it impossible for the Brahmins to continue to live there this was the best policy that could be followed. They are anxious that it should be pursued and report a good reaction of the public. I hope you will see the situation in this light. [Y. B]. Chavan[1] and Tapase also thought this to be the best policy.

I hope you are well and with regards,

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
B. G. Kher

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

54

Camp Doon Court
Dehra Dun
5 June 1948

My dear Balasaheb,

Thank you for your letter of 26 May 1948.

I have carefully considered the matter in the light of your explanation. But I regret I am still unconvinced that the action was wise and proper. Fear of further reprisals by perpetrators of evil and wrong-doers can hardly be a justification for treating such wrong-doers with leniency. It has never paid to condone crimes of violence under any so-called repentance. After all, such things are done under a spirit of mass hysteria, and leniency shown at one time is soon forgotten; more particularly, it is ignored when the scene of another mass hysteria sets in.

However, although your action places us under a serious predicament in Kolhapur, now that you have already taken action on those lines I have nothing more to say.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. B. G. Kher
Premier of Bombay
Bombay

[1] President, District Congress Committee, 1941; directed underground movement in Satara district, August 1942-May 1943 until his arrest at Phaltan, 1944; elected MLA, Bombay, 1946; appointed Parliamentary Secretary, 1946; appointed Minister for Civil Supplies, Bombay, 1952; Chief Minister, Bombay, 1956-62; Minister of Defence, Government of India, 1962-66; Minister for Home, Government of India, 1966-69; Finance Minister, since 1969

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SARDAR PATEL ADDRESSING A RALLY OF DELHI POLICE FORCE. SHANKAR PRASADA, CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF DELHI, IS SEEN ON THE SARDAR'S RIGHT

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PRESS CONFERENCE BY SARDAR PATEL ON 12 JANUARY 1948 ON THE FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT WITH PAKISTAN. ON THE SARDAR'S RIGHT IS SHANMUKHAM CHETTY, FINANCE MINISTER, AND ON HIS LEFT N. C. MEHTA, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING. DURGA DAS OF THE HINDUSTAN TIMES IS SEEN ASKING A QUESTION. K. SANTHANAM, A SENIOR JOURNALIST, WHO LATER BECAME MINISTER OF STATE FOR RAILWAYS, IS SEEN ON HIS RIGHT

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Bombay
8 June 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 5th instant regarding release of some of those who took part in the disturbances in the Deccan following the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and thank you for it. I note what you have stated for future guidance.

Yours sincerely,
B. G. Kher

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

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Dehra Dun
12 June 1948

My dear Dr. Syama Prasad,

I understand that under the auspices of the Hindu Mahasabha subscriptions are being raised for the defence of the accused in Gandhiji's murder trial. Originally, it seems the idea was to do so for the defence of Savarkar, but now the objective has been widened in its scope.

I need hardly say how completely in the wrong the Mahasabha will place itself by sponsoring this proposal and actively promoting this objective. The Mahasabha has now become a non-political body. The only motive which can make it associate itself with a venture of this kind can be political. Apart from this, a public movement for defence can only arise if there is public sympathy for the accused. For the Mahasabha to associate itself with the defence would, therefore, be taken as an indication of that sympathy. I would, therefore, urge upon you with all the earnestness at my command that you should try to dissociate the Mahasabha from this move. I hope you will succeed in doing so.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
New Delhi

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New Delhi
16 June 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I received your letter about the raising of subscriptions for the defence of the accused in Gandhiji's murder trial. I had a talk with Mr. Bhopatkar about this matter this morning. I think the position has been somewhat misunderstood. The Hindu Mahasabha has not appointed any Defence Committee. The All-India Defence Committee is an entirely independent organisation. The All-India Hindu Mahasabha as such is not raising any subscription. As you have yourself hinted, the move for raising funds started in some quarters mainly for the defence of Savarkarji. I need not go into the merits or demerits of his arrest. But you will realise that his arrest has caused considerable anxiety in the minds of a large number of people in all parts of India. There are many who hold the view that he is innocent and everything possible should be done to defend him. As regards the defence of the other accused, the matter was raised by the court on the opening day of the trial. All the accused said that they would make their own arrangement for defence. Some of the accused have indeed done so. A few with the approval of the court sought the assistance of Mr. Bhopatkar in making necessary arrangements. As was explained in the court day before yesterday this also has been completed. The lawyers who have been engaged, it appears, are mostly non-political persons and they are coming in their professional capacity. Government is not paying anything towards their fees and some funds have been raised for the purpose of meeting their immediate expenses. I had a talk with Mr. Bhopatkar previously. In fact he gave me his personal view that if Savarkarji was not an accused, he would not have been interested in conducting the proceeding at all. But the inclusion of Savarkarji did obviously alter the situation and he had to appear on his behalf and out of loyalty towards him.

The Hindu Mahasabha as such has not made any arrangement for defence of any of the accused, nor has authorised the raising of any subscription. But as I have already said, funds mainly raised for Savarkar's defence have been placed in the hands of the Defence Committee for utilisation.

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I am hoping to come to Dehra Dun on Friday afternoon. I propose to start by motor at about 2.30 p.m. reaching there in the evening. I intend to start back for Delhi on Saturday morning so that I may reach here by noon. I hope you will be able to spare some time to meet me. If this suits you, please ask Shankar to let me know by telephone tomorrow. I may spend the night at Roorkee, if necessary. I trust you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

58

New Delhi
22 June 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

There are two accounts opened by Bapu and operated by him without any authority to anyone else to operate them. One is with the United Commercial Bank Ltd., New Delhi, known as 'Mahatma M. K. Gandhi (Agency Account)', Birla House, New Delhi, with a credit balance of about Rs. 1,45,000 and the other with the Central Bank of India, Patna, known as 'Gandhi Amanat Nidhi', C/o Hon'ble Dr. Mahmud,[1] Bankipore, Patna, with a credit balance of about Rs. 33,000. Sjt. Chimanlal Shah,[2] who, as you know, has been operating all the accounts of Bapu, as the manager of the Sevagram Ashram, is approaching the banks to allow him to operate these accounts also. It is understood that the banks will accept this request, if it is recommended by you or by me. Sjt. Jajuji has asked me to give the recommendation, and has told me that it is necessary to have the accounts transferred for facility of operation when required but the expenditure will be subject to your sanction. I shall be obliged if you let me know whether I should ask the banks to transfer the latter account to be operated by Sjt. Chimanlal Shah. Personally, I do not see any objection but I am awaiting your instructions.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

[1] Dr. Syed Mahmud: veteran Congressman of Bihar, who held offices as Minister in Bihar and Deputy Minister, External Affairs, Union Government

[2] Leading solicitor; MP

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Dehra Dun
24 June 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

Many thanks for your letter of 22 June 1948 regarding the two accounts opened by Bapu and operated by him without any authority to any one else to operate them. I have spoken to Ghanshyamdas regarding the account with the United Commercial Bank, New Delhi. He will make enquiries and let us know what is to be done.

I do not see how you or I come in. It has nothing to do with Congress accounts and I fail to understand why our recommendation should be needed.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President
Indian National Congress
New Delhi

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TELEGRAM

Porbandar
18 August 1948

Pujya Maniben
Care Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

FOUNDATIONSTONE LAYING CEREMONY ON PUJYA MAHATMAJI'S KIRTI MANDIR WILL BE PERFORMED BY DARBAR SHRI GOPALDASBHAI AT 11 A.M. ON THURSDAY NINETEENTH. PLEASE REQUEST BAPUJI [Vallabhbhai] TO SEND HIS KIND BLESSINGS.

NANJI KALIDAS MEHTA[1]

[1] Philanthropist; Business man of Uganda and Kenya

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
19 August 1948

Nanji Kalidas Mehta
Porbandar

YOUR TELEGRAM OF 18 REACHED ME TODAY. MUCH REGRET DELAY. PLEASE ACCEPT MY BEST WISHES AND BLESSINGS ON THE OCCASION.

VALLABHBHAI

62

New Delhi
9 September 1948

My dear Sardarji,

You wrote to me some time ago about the raising of subscriptions for the defence of the accused in Gandhiji's murder trial. I wrote to Mr. Bhopatkar about the matter and he has sent me a reply which I enclose for your information.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

All-India Hindu Mahasabha
Hindu Mahasabha Bhavan
Reading Road
New Delhi
29 August 1948

My dear Dr. Mookerjee,

As desired by you, I am hereby supplying to you the information as hereunder:

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The Hindu Mahasabha has not, as such, opened any defence fund or appointed any defence committee. Not a penny from the funds of the Hindu Mahasabha has been utilised for the purpose of the trial. Some of the rooms in the Hindu Mahasabha Bhavan occupied by defence counsel are given on monthly rent.

As I explained to you personally, the Defence Committee is an entirely separate body and it is raising its fund separately.

The Defence Committee was appointed for giving legal aid to all such workers of the Hindu Mahasabha as required or called for it.

When Mr. Savarkar was implicated in Mahatma Gandhi's murder case, there was naturally a demand from various parts of India, particularly Maharashtra, for giving him the necessary legal aid, as a vast number of people generally felt that he could not be connected with such a crime.

Various Hindu Sabhas had collected funds for the Defence Committee entirely for the defence of Veer Savarkar.

The circular letter referred by you in your letter was intended to call upon Hindu Sabhas to collect money for this purpose.

Even now I would like to repeat what I told you earlier, that had Mr. Savarkar not been implicated in the case, none of us connected with the Hindu Mahasabha would have come forward to conduct or participate in the defence.

Two Working Committee meetings of the Hindu Mahasabha were held after Gandhiji's murder. The only resolution that they adopted was of unequivocal condemnation of the act. No appeal was made on behalf of the Working Committee or support was extended towards the Defence Committee.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
L. B. Bhopatkar
President

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
New Delhi

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New Delhi
10 September 1948

My dear Dr. Syama Prasad,

Thank you for your letter of 9 September 1948.

It is quite clear now that the Hindu Sabhas are being mobilised for the purpose of collecting subscription for the Defence Fund.

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It is futile, therefore, to argue that the Hindu Mahasabha is not officially concerned with it. It was open to the friends and well-wishers of Mr. Savarkar to organise separate agencies for the purpose of collecting funds. If the official organisation of the Hindu Mahasabha is being utilised for this purpose, there can be only one inference, namely, that the Hindu Mahasabha is in it. After what you had written to me last time, this has come to me as a great surprise.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
New Delhi

64

New Delhi
7 November 1948

My dear Dr. Matthai,[1]

I am sending herewith a copy of the letter which Ghanshyamdas Birla has written to Rajen Babu. I understand that we shall get a substantial contribution from the Imperial Bank of India. I should be grateful if you would kindly let me know whether something could be done on the lines suggested by Birlaji.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. John Matthai
Minister for Finance
Government of India
New Delhi

[1] Dr. John Matthai: educationist and economist; Vice-Chancellor, Bombay and Kerala Universities; MLC (Madras), 1922-25; joined Tatas in 1944; Central Minister, 1947-50; rejoined Tatas, 1950-55; later Chairman, Board of Directors, State Bank of India

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ENCLOSURE

Bombay
1 November 1948

My dear Rajendra Babu,

You remember that at my suggestion a Bill had been passed enabling the companies to subscribe to the Gandhi Memorial Fund. Unfortunately, the Imperial Bank of India, which is the top Bank and which also is anxious to donate, is not covered by this legislation. The word "company" as defined in Clause (2) of Section 2(1) of the Indian Companies Act does not cover the Imperial Bank of India. It is, therefore, suggested that the Government should issue an ordinance enabling the law to cover also the Imperial Bank of India. I enclose herewith a copy of a letter which the Managing Director of the Imperial Bank of India has written to the Governor, Reserve Bank, as far back as 13 September. I understand that the Reserve Bank has already brought the matter to the notice of the Government of India. Will you kindly have a talk with Dr. Matthai on this point and ask him to help in issuing an ordinance so as to cover the Imperial Bank of India? There is no controversy over the matter and I hope the necessary action will be taken without further delay.

Yours sincerely,
G. D. Birla

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

LETTER FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE IMPERIAL BANK OF INDIA, TO THE GOVERNOR OF THE RESERVE BANK

Imperial Bank of India
Central Office
Bombay
13 September 1948

The Governor
Reserve Bank of India
Central Office
Bombay

Dear Sir,

Mahatma Gandhi National Memorial Fund
Donations (Companies) Act 1948

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With reference to the above-mentioned Act published on page 193 of Part IV of the Gazette of India dated the 31st ultimo, the Imperial Bank of India is not a "company" as defined in Clause (2) of Section 2(1) of the Indian Companies Act and the provisions of the Gandhi National Memorial Fund Donations (Companies) Act do not therefore apply to this Bank.

We shall accordingly be glad if you will request the Government of India to take the necessary steps by ordinance or otherwise to make it possible for this Institution to make its donation.

Yours faithfully,
A. R. Chisholm
Managing Director

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New Delhi
18 November 1948

My dear Sardar,

Will you please refer to your letter dated the 7th instant regarding the contribution by the Imperial Bank towards the Gandhi National Memorial Fund? It has been confirmed by the Law Ministry that legislation would be required to enable the Imperial Bank to contribute to this Fund, and the Commerce Ministry, who are in administrative charge, have been requested to take the necessary steps to issue an ordinance for the purpose.

Yours sincerely,
John Matthai

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
24 November 1948

My dear Rajaji,

I am sending herewith a list of members of the Cabinet, both past and present, together with the amount they have subscribed to the Gandhi National Memorial Fund.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Governor-General of India
Government House
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Canning Road
New Delhi
24 November 1948

Dear Maniben,

I am giving below the amounts of contributions received from the Ministers in the Central Government towards the G.N.M.F. The amounts paid by the provincial Governors and Premiers and the other ministers of the provincial Governments are not known in the central office since the lists of such donations are maintained at the provincial headquarters. I am writing to the provincial committees for this information and shall send you the information as soon as such information is received.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	Rs. 2,500
Shri Jairamdas Doulatram	Rs. 1,296/10/6
Dr. Rajendra Prasad	Rs. 2,000
Dr. and Mrs. John Matthai	Rs. 1,000
Shrimati Rajkumari Amrit Kaur[1]	Rs. 3,000
Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee	Rs. 1,000

[1] Rajkumari Amrit Kaur: Personal assistant to Mahatma Gandhi; Central Health Minister, 1947-57

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Shri Jagjivan Ram[1]	Rs. 850/8/
Shri Shanmukham Chetty	Rs. 2,500
Shri Mohanlal Saksena	Rs. 1,000
Shri Gopalaswamy Ayyangar	Rs. 1,000
Shri K. C. Neogy[2]	Rs. 1,500
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel	Rs. 1,000

It might be that some Members of the Central Cabinet may have given their donations in their own respective provinces. In that case their names will not appear in the above list.

Yours sincerely,
N. Krishnaswamy
[Secretary to the Governor-General]

Smt. Maniben Patel

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Camp Pilani
Jaipur State
13 October 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am enclosing a telegram which I have received from Mahashaya Krishna, Editor and proprietor of Urdu Pratap, protesting against the arrest of Pandit Mauli Chandra Sharma of the Janadhikar Samiti under Section 3 of the Public Safety Act. I enclose also a letter from Shri Mauli Chandra Sharma himself. There is a cutting from a Hindi paper containing the statement of Dr. Bhagwandas of Benares condemning the action of the Government towards the RSS men. There is a general movement to revive the RSS about which people from different places have spoken to me. I hear that in Delhi itself occasionally rallies, drills and physical exercise which they used to have in a large body, have been started. I am also told that this thing is happening in other cities of the country also. I do not know how far all this information which has been conveyed to me by various persons, is correct. Congress people generally think that the Janadhikar Samiti is an organisation which has been started only to help the

[1] Parliamentary Secretary, Bihar Government, 1937-39; member, Legislative Assembly and Constituent Assembly, 1946-50; Labour Minister, Interim Government of India, September 1946; Labour Minister, Government of India, August 1946-52; currently Minister of Defence

[2] Member, Standing Committee of Ministers of the Chamber of Princes, 1940-42; Minister, Government of India, 1947-50; Chairman, Indian Railway Enquiry Committee, 1947; Chairman, Planning Advisory Board, Government of India

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RSS people under the pretext of protecting 'civil liberties' of the people. Again, I am not in a position to say how far this interpretation of the activities of the Janadhikar Samiti is correct. Delhi Congressmen have spoken to me more than once that the Janadhikar Samiti gets undeserved support from Congressmen, and you will remember that on one occasion when Tandonji[1] was going to address a meeting, I was approached to request him not to do so, but as this request was made to me when I was leaving Delhi at the railway station, I referred them to you and you had some talk with Tandonji. The meeting of course was addressed by Tandonji and Shri Gadgil presided. Nothing objectionable was said. As a matter of fact, speeches delivered by Tandonji and Gadgil were not only not objectionable but quite helpful. So it is very difficult in these circumstances to judge the motive and the activities of these people without having fuller information and knowledge about their inner working. I do not know if Government has such information and if its action is based upon that knowledge. I, therefore, thought it best to pass all these papers on to you for such action as you may think just and proper in the circumstances.

As regards Shri Mauli Chandra Sharma, he once came to see me some time ago and requested me to address a meeting under the auspices of the Janadhikar Samiti. It was soon after Kripalaniji[2] had done so. At that time I told him that the way in which the defence of Mahatma Gandhi Murder trial was being conducted had hurt me very much. I could understand any murderer claiming to be defended and, as a person having a legal training, I more or less instinctively consider a man to be not guilty unless his guilt is brought home to him, but it was not the defence of the accused which was being offered but a hero was being made of the suspects. Subscriptions were raised and distinguished lawyers were being invited from various places for the defence of the people involved. I told him that all this indicated some sort of sympathy if not something worse between those who are organising the defence and the perpetrators of the crime. I also told him that I did not believe in hanging people for murder but defence conducted in such a way hurt me. He appreciated the force of what I said and after that I have had no occasion to

[1] P. D. Tandon: leading Congressman of Allahabad; Speaker of UP Assembly, 1937-39; member of Constituent Assembly; elected Congress President in 1950

[2] J. B. Kripalani: Joined Gandhi in 1917; Congress General Secretary, 1934-46; party President, 1946-47; member of CA, 1946-50; resigned from Congress in 1951; MP intermittently, 1952-70

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meet him. . . . I personally feel that people's liberty should not be lightly interfered with, and our Government being composed of men who have all their life protested against such action has to be very cautious and circumspect in using such extraordinary powers. At the same time I cannot also ignore the fact that if there are people who are capable of committing a heinous crime not only against the country, but against the world, they have to be at least prevented from carrying out their mischievous designs. It becomes very difficult to judge in these circumstances, and there can be no doubt that a large number of innocent people are bound to get involved when there are arrests and imprisonments on a large scale. I would not therefore do anything which could give even indirect encouragement to this class of people by a policy of non-interference with our liberties. I would also at the same time take no action against any individual unless there was definite proof to satisfy some perfectly reliable authority against him. I doubt not Pandit Mauli Chandra Sharma and his collaborators must have approached you also in this connection, but I thought I had better pass on this letter to you.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

PS.

Since the above was written I have seen in the paper that Pandit Mauli Chandra Sharma was released.

R. P.

ENCLOSURE I

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
11 October 1948

Hon'ble Rajendra Babu
Pilani
Jaipur

JANADHIKAR SAMITI DUMBSTRUCK AT ARREST OF PANDIT MAULI CHANDRA SHARMA GENERAL SECRETARY JANADHIKAR SAMITI UNDER SECTION THREE OF PUBLIC [safety act]. SAMITI CONDEMN THIS ARBITRARY ACTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES. PRAY IMMEDIATE [action].

MAHASHAYA KRISHNA

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ENCLOSURE II

Akhil Bhartiya Hindi Bhavan
Bhupendra Bhavan
Nicholson Road
Delhi
11 October 1948

Respected Babuji,

I have been put under arrest under Section 3 of the Public Safety Act. The reason given is that I spoke something prejudicial in my speech at Delhi on 4 September. This is blatant untruth and groundless. Again, who is to decide whether my speech had prejudicial colour—the police or the court of justice? To arrest a person in this manner—will this go on in this free country?

I have had my differences with the several policies of the Congress Governments. But my arrest is against the very traditions of the Congress Governments and a sheer injustice to me.

Could you please enquire into this matter?

Yours,
Mauli Chandra Sharma

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

[Original in Hindi]

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20 October 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 1948 regarding Shri Mauli Chandra Sharma. I have already written to you how his arrest came about.

I hope you are now better.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Pilani

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144 Oaktree Lane
Selly Oak
Birmingham 29
30 January 1948

Dear Sardar Patel,

Perhaps you will be surprised to see this letter from me for we have met only two or three times, rather casually, when Muriel Lester (my aunt) and I were with Bapu in 1939. When Sudhir[1] was Public Relations Officer over here, he sought my help at India House.

I have only just received the horrible news of Bapu's death. My thoughts have gone straight to you. I felt I wanted to write to you at once. I have a feeling that your grief will be almost too heavy to bear and will be different in nature from that of almost everyone else. Your relationship with Bapu has been something so special and so precious throughout these long difficult years.

I am personally thankful that before he left us he made his explanatory statement about his "life-long and faithful comrade." I am glad, too, that you made yours: "I am a frank man. I say bitter things to Hindus and Muslims alike. At the same time I maintain, as I have said a number of times, I am a friend of the Muslims." These statements will help to dispel criticism both here and there.

Forgive me if this note seems an encroachment on your sorrow. It is written in good faith and in friendship. I cannot speak of what Bapu's death means to me personally. "Don't worry; listen to me" may prove a good text for us all.

Yours sincerely,
Dorothy Hogg

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

[1] Sudhir Ghosh: Unofficial emissary of Congress in Britain before Independence; Public Relations Officer at India House in 1946

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New Delhi
14 February 1948

Dear Miss Dorothy Hogg,

Many thanks for your letter of 30 January 1948, and your message of sympathy and condolence. Bapu's loss would have been at any time overwhelming. At this particular juncture when we needed him so much it is completely shattering. Sympathy of friends like you is undoubtedly comforting. At the same time it is a sharp reminder of what links Bapu had forged between India and the world. We hope those links will never sever.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Miss Dorothy Hogg
144 Oaktree Lane
Selly Oak
Birmingham 29
England

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CHAPTER III

TURMOIL IN ASSAM

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Government House
Shillong
9 February 1948

My dear Sardarji,

On my return to Shillong I spoke to [Gopinath] Bardoloi,[1] as arranged with you, that during his approaching visit to Delhi he might discuss with you Tayebulla's appointment as Minister before formally asking me to appoint him. He agreed. I repeated my previous advice that Tayebulla's accession to the Ministry would not add to its strength and that in the present circumstances there was no need to be meticulous about its communal composition; and that we should bide our time and when possible appoint some more suitable Muslim, e.g. Fakhruddin [Ali] Ahmed[2], who would be an asset to the Ministry and also relieve Bardoloi of some portion of his departmental burden.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Hydari[3]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

[1] Assam Congress leader; headed Congress Ministry in 1937-39 and in 1945-48

[2] Finance Minister in Bardoloi Ministry, 1930-39; defeated in general election in 1946 and appointed Advocate-General of Assam; Minister in Assam, 1952-67; Union Minister since 1967

[3] ICS; member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1945-46; Governor of Assam till after Independence

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New Delhi
16 February 1948

My dear Hydari,

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 1948. I am glad Bardoloi has agreed to the suggestion to discuss the question with me before he formally takes it up with you.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Sir Akbar Hydari, KCIE, CSI
Governor of Assam
Shillong

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Dehra Dun
30 June 1948

My dear Hydari,

I am sending herewith a note which I have received from Shri. N. Datt Mazumdar,[1] Minister of West Bengal, and its accompaniment. I should be grateful for your comments.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Sir Akbar Hydari
Shillong

[1] Congress leader of Bengal; Minister in Dr. P. C. Ghosh's Cabinet after partition

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ENCLOSURE

28 June 1948

The enclosed copy of a letter I have received from Dr. S. K. Datta Gupta, who was a highly respectable doctor at Gauhati but now a refugee in Calcutta, will speak for itself. It describes in perspective what exactly happened at Gauhati and how the development progressed unchecked until the climax was reached in May last in the form of anti-Bengali riots engineered by hooligans whose activities were not only connived at but obviously also encouraged. Every line of this letter, I think, deserves careful reading. Here is an eye-witness's picture given by a sufferer. I am, therefore, sending you a copy both for your perusal and reflexion.

I am also informed of another curious fact that at the time of the happening the Deputy Commissioner, the Police Superintendent and every other corresponding high officer either of the civil or military authorities at Gauhati happened to be a Muslim known to be an erstwhile enthusiast and supporter of the Muslim League regime. It is definitely alleged by many responsible sufferers that it was more than a chance coincidence that elements corresponding to those who had connived at or clandestinely organised the Muslim League's Direct Action in Calcutta in August 1946, were mobilised at Gauhati as a preliminary to letting loose these anti-Bengali riots with perhaps more far-reaching and sinister objects lurking behind what has happened. If there is any foundation for such allegations, I think the Gauhati incidents call for a closer enquiry of a very confidential nature on the part of the Central Government.

N. Datt Mazumdar
Minister,
Government of West Bengal
Judicial & Legislative Departments

To
The Deputy Prime Minister
India

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EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER FROM DR. S. K. DATTA GUPTA OF GAUHATI

196/1, Rash Behari Avenue
Calcutta
25 June 1948

From
S. K. Datta Gupta, M.B.
Late Senior House Surgeon
Calcutta Medical College Hospital
(Honours in Pathology)

To
Shri Niharendu Datt Mazumdar
Minister, Judicial Department
Government of West Bengal

Respected Sir,

In January of 1942, I went over to Gauhati in an attempt to pick up a good private practice there, as I was informed by some of my friends that there were happy prospects of a good practice there. At Gauhati, as a medical practitioner for six and a half years from January 1942 to June 1948, I had very great opportunities of mixing intimately with people there of all schools of thought and culture; and as such I could follow very closely the process of evolution of the evil spirit of provincialism and the anti-Bengali drive in Assam, which reached the climax in May last.

In brief, the following facts can be made out without any difficulty:

(a) The life and property of all Bengalis were very insecure from 18 May to 26 May, before which full military concentration was not observed in the town.

(b) The honour and dignity of the womenfolk was at great stake both in streets and houses at that period of time.

(c) No material help from the authorities could be obtained until the news was published in the Bengal Press.

(d) No attempts worth mentioning were made by the authorities to bring the actual offenders, looters and breakers of law and order under arrest. It is a strange fact that a good percentage of the people who have been arrested are those who have tried to defend their own home and their own dear and near ones when they were attacked by furious mobs.

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(e) The victims of the Noakhali tragedy sustained another great onslaught here by the rowdy elements of Gauhati.

The methods adopted by the authorities have been very close imitations of all points of administration by the ill-famed League Ministry in Bengal. This will be corroborated by any one who has closely followed those anxious days.

I remain,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
Sudhindra Kumar Datta Gupta, M.B.
(Medical Practitioner)

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Government House
Shillong
3 March 1948

My dear Sardarji,

Position of Assam and Pakistan Activities.

Many thanks for your letter of 23 February enclosing a note handed to you on the above subject. I received it on 1 March on my return from tour in the North-East Frontier Agency, and hasten to send you my comments.

2. The basic fact from which most of Assam's troubles along the whole of her western border flow is the desire of Pakistan to harass our people living in these border areas economically and in other ways. They hope in this way (a) to squeeze the Government of Assam into giving them concessions on points of dispute between Assam and East Bengal, and (b) so far as the Khasi States bordering on Sylhet are concerned, to attract them to their side and so utilise the mineral resources which East Bengal lacks.

3. In so far as the Khasis generally are concerned, they have no sympathy with or desire to join Pakistan. We, that is the Assam Government, must on our side see that while we cannot save the people of those Khasi States which abut on Sylhet completely from economic harassment, we reduce its extent as much as possible. The Deputy Commissioner of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is also my Deputy in the Khasi States, and I am constantly on the lookout for instances of economic harassment like refusal to sell the Khasis rice or buy their oranges or potatoes; and the remedy is to supply rice from Shillong, even though it may result in loss to us, and to find alternative markets for their potatoes and oranges etc.,

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even though that may mean purchase on Government account. Our willingness and ability to help them has gradually percolated into the interior, and I now hear fewer complaints than I did after the Boundary Commission's award.

4. The next point to consider is how far we can rely on the loyalty of the Khasi Chiefs to the Indian Union and to Assam. I think we can in the case of all but two or three, whose territories abut on Sylhet. One of them is Cherrapunji, who is mentioned in the note. This Siem even before he signed the Instrument of Accession was flirting with the local authorities in Sylhet; and when he came to sign the Instrument of Accession I warned him against playing this game. He is attracted to Pakistan for the reason that some part of his personal land lies in Sylhet district and he feels that he cannot get his rent unless he plays in with the local Pakistan authorities. Another, and perhaps even more important reason is that, owing to his unpopularity with his people, he is in danger of losing his Siemship. You will remember that in accepting their accession I warned the Khasi Siems that the fact of such accession was not a guarantee of a particular person continuing as a Siem whatever happened; and that if there was a substantial amount of feeling in a particular State that a Siem was not doing his duty, I would have an enquiry conducted by my Deputy; and, if it was found that the allegations against the Siem were true, to order a new election under the customary law of the State. This undertaking of mine is regarded by Khasis generally as their Magna Charta; and has reconciled them to the signing by the Siems of the Instrument of Accession and to the very wide power of interference which I, as your Agent, exercise over the administration of the Khasi States; but it is this very undertaking which is disliked by the Siems, who consider their tenure thereby made insecure, and by the Executive of the Federation of the Khasi States, who feel that in so far as it goes it is a diminution of their influence.

5. When I ordered the enquiries into the doings of six or seven Siems in pursuance of the undertaking (my Deputy is now conducting these enquiries) the Federation protested and requested that I should get them to conduct the enquiry. I did not accede to this request, because its grant would have invested them with power which they would probably have misused for party politics. As you know, there are two organisations in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills—those who support the Federation and those who support the People's Conference. I have been endeavouring to

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bring the Federation and the People's Conference together in the matter of setting up an administrative machinery for the Khasi States, and it would have been unwise to give the Federation power which they would have used to crush the Conference.

6. You may ask why I am going through this somewhat laborious process of conciliation trying as it is to one's patience. The reason is that what we do in one Tribal area has its repercussions on other Tribal areas in Assam. If I were to act in the Cromwellian manner and say "a plague on all your differences" and take over the administration, it might have a disturbing effect in other Tribal areas, whose peoples or Chiefs might consider that it would be their turn next; and even among the Khasis, who are by and large loyal to Assam and to the Indian Union, such action may offend their pride and so induce them to listen to the siren voice across our border, who have no principles and are ready to promise anything. I feel therefore that we must follow a policy of patient adjustment of difficulties.

7. I have sent my Deputy to the States of Nongstein and Rambrai with instructions to obtain the signature of these two Siems to the Instrument of Accession. Their failure to do so will be followed by pressure of various kinds and in the last resort by deposition. These are the only two Siems out of 25 who have not yet signed the Instrument. The States Ministry has been sent a list of the States who have signed the Instrument, but copies of the Instrument as signed have been kept here till the whole bundle can be sent to the States Ministry.

8. Mention is made in the note that the Khasi States deposit of Rs. 4 lakhs has not yet been handed over to the Federation. The reason is that I want the Federation first to set up a proper administrative machinery for the handling of affairs, including financial, vested in the States under the Instrument of Accession. The [setting] up of such an administrative machinery is being delayed because of the negotiations now going on between the Federation Executive and the Committee of the Khasi People's Conference. If I were now to hand over this money to the Federation Executive, it would, I am afraid, be frittered away; a number of new jobs would be created without its incumbents having very much to do; whereas once a proper administrative setup is established this amount of Rs. 4 lakhs would be useful as a backing for their activities; for example, I would like some of it to be spent in trying out the experiment of having a sheep farm

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in an effort to popularise sheep in the Khasi Hills. At present the people use imported woollen garments when it may be possible for them to make their garments from their own wool.

9. It is true that Sylhet officials and their agents pay visits to Shillong and other parts of Assam. Lacking a good intelligence service we have not much idea of their activities. One remedy would be to prohibit the entry of certain Pakistan officials, like the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, into Shillong or other parts of Assam, and I have sometimes thought of that; but then we would at once invite retaliation against our own officers who, till the through road to Silchar is built, journey through Sylhet to get into Cachar and onwards instead of taking a circuitous railway journey via Lumding to avoid Pakistan territory; also this facility of being able to travel through Sylhet gives the more intelligent among our officers a chance to observe how things are going there and to report to us.

10. The "remedial suggestions" made in the note of constituting a belt of 20 miles all along the frontier of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills under military administration is too fantastic to merit consideration, and I will therefore not comment on them. I am afraid sometimes our self-constituted advisers forget that it is part of Pakistan's game to try and keep us constantly on the hop; while keeping vigilant we must not give them the satisfaction of succeeding in doing so. It is true that Assam is at the present moment in a difficult position economically and militarily, also she is in a position of some discomfort; but with the backing we are getting from you and the Central Government, I feel no cause for either alarm or despondency.

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
27 March 1948

My dear Sir Akbar,

I have explained to Sardar in very brief terms the contents of your letter of 3 March 1948, regarding the position of Assam and Pakistan activities. It was at the first available opportunity that I could do so, partly because I thought it would cheer him

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up to know what excellent work you were doing in that part of the country. He has asked me to say that he much appreciates all that you are doing and that he is quite convinced that you are proceeding on the right lines. He agrees that the problem of the Tribes is such as cannot be allowed to be made a mess of by irresponsible elements. Essentially, a practical approach is required and both firmness and tact have to be used. He is happy to find that this is exactly the manner in which you are dealing with the situation.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar

His Excellency Sir Akbar Hydari
Shillong

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Government House
Shillong
20 March 1948

My dear Sardarji,

This is in continuation of my letter of 8 March. This letter is merely by way of cheering you during your convalescence as I have already sent a telegram to your Ministry announcing that the formal accession of Nongstein and Rambrai had been obtained—these were the only two out of the 25 Khasi States which had not formally acceded. My Deputy, Jarman, who left for Nongstein on 7 March, has been there all this period. At one time it looked as if he might encounter armed opposition and so I sent a platoon of the Assam Rifles, whose presence and Jarman's tact did the trick. He got the support of the people and the Myntris and at one time actually deposed the Siem who was putting off signing the Instrument of Accession on one excuse or another. The Siem then thought better of it and apologised, asked to be reinstated and signed the Instrument this morning. I have accepted his reinstatement, because I was informed by Jarman that both the people and the Myntris would welcome a friendly settlement. I propose however to establish an Assam Rifles post in Nongstein State near the borders of Pakistan, which will keep an eye on the Siem as well as protect the people from harassment from across the border. The Siem of Rambrai signed on the 17th of this month.

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This episode has a lesson to teach. It is that we should as soon as possible open up road communications between Shillong and the Khasi States on the borders; for, it is economic even more than physical harassment which the Pakistanis are using to sow discontent among the inhabitants of these areas against the Indian Union. This is a matter which I referred to in my letter to you of 8 March. Apart from Pakistan's general desire to keep us on the hop by creating trouble along our borders, there is a material reason also; it is that in many of these Khasi border areas valuable minerals are to be found which East Bengal covets.

I hope you are now on the high road to complete recovery. My wife joins me in sending you and Miss Maniben[1] our best wishes.

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

PS.

The Mountbattens[2] had a good reception in Assam but nothing compared to what you had in its magnitude and warmth!

A. H.

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Government House
Shillong
8 April 1948

My dear Sardarji,

Rajaji recently wrote to me suggesting the banning of Communist organisations in Assam as has been done in West Bengal. In consultation with Bardoloi I sent him a reply as in the copy enclosed. I also enclose copy of a letter which I have written to Matthai. These letters are for your information; but in case you disagree with the policy outlined in any particular, I would be grateful if you would let me know in your own good time.

1 Daughter of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who acted as his personal aide for over two decades

2 Last British Viceroy and Governor-General of India, March 1947-August 1947; carried out partition of India and transfer of power to the two Dominions in August 1947; first Governor-General of Independent India

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Kania's[1] visit to Assam was very welcome, and his courtesy in coming here to inaugurate our High Court much appreciated. I have asked him to suggest the names of three or four people who, in his opinion, would be suitable for appointment to the two posts of judges in the Assam High Court. I would then try to get one or two of them accepted by Bardoloi. I know that he is just as keen as I am to ensure that our High Court starts with judges who will inspire respect. There is naturally pressure for the appointment of local men, and if that is to be successfully resisted wholly or in part, I must have alternative names to suggest which could be considered more suitable.

Kania gave us the latest news of your progress towards recovery. We were much relieved and glad that you were gathering strength. My wife and I both renew our warm invitation to you and Maniben to spend some time with us in Shillong. I will guarantee your not being disturbed except when you want to be. We are going to Bombay at the end of April to see our girls on the boat to England. The elder one is going for training in architecture and the younger one for a short holiday with Rashid whom she is to marry on the 25th of this month. We hope to return to Shillong on 6 or 7 May, and any time between then and the end of May would be ideal for you to pay us a visit and so establish your complete recovery.

With kind regards to you and Maniben from us both.

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

PS.

Please do not trouble to reply—just send us a telegram when and if you can come.

[1] Justice H. J. Kania: Judge, Bombay High Court, 1933; first Chief Justice, Supreme Court of India

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ENCLOSURE I

Government House
Shillong
6 April 1948

My dear Rajaji,

Many thanks for your letter of 29 March regarding Communist organisations. It was very kind of you to have given us the benefit of your sage counsel. Bardoloi and I have considered it with all the respect which coming from you it deserved and state below the action and the reasons for it which Assam proposes to take.

Communism has not fortunately bit deep into our life. It exists generally among railway employees, especially those hailing from Bengal, who are in great majority. They are really the source from which Communist influences tend to flow into such industries as we have, like tea, and into our student organisations; on the other side are the great bulk of the population of Assam, plainsmen and hillmen whose outlook is if anything Socialist but not Communist; and even to their Socialist tendencies they bring a certain calmness of approach which prefers a gradual to a revolutionary solution. Both by tradition and through the effect of Congress teaching in the last 25 years or so, they resent anything which could be made to appeal by the enemies of the present established society as arbitrary infringement of the right to freedom of speech and of political association. We feel that an outright outlawry of all Communist organisations would throw this solid block of decent and law-abiding citizens against the Government and would earn unmerited sympathy among them for the Communist cause. We therefore feel that in Assam a somewhat different approach in dealing with Communist activities is required to that which has been taken by your Government. The openly militant part of the Communist organisation like the Red Guards should of course be outlawed and orders are issuing declaring them illegal.

As regards Communists generally, we are having lists prepared by our CID of important workers whether secret or open. These should be completed in the next two or three days, and orders will be issued to Deputy Commissioners to rope them in under the Assam Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1947. Secondly, the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, CID, who is the head of our CID, has been instructed to get in touch with his opposite number from West Bengal to arrange for a continuous service of information in respect of movements, chiefly by railway, of important Communist workers from outside Assam, with a view to roping them in also under the Assam

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Maintenance of Public Order Act. These measures can be taken without raising opposition on ideological grounds among the great masses of our people, who, as I have said above, are not attracted towards the doctrines of Communism or at any rate towards those which seek to bring about a Communist heaven by revolutionary means. The governing factor in the success of our proposals is the degree of intelligence and energy with which our officers, magistrates and police carry out their instructions. Bardoloi, who is himself very much alive to this Communist danger, will, I know, do all he can to ensure that our officers do their duty.

I hope that you will consider our proposals adequate, and if you have any suggestions for their improvement I shall be very grateful if you will kindly let me have them.

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Governor of West Bengal

ENCLOSURE II

Government House
Shillong
6 April 1948

My dear Matthai,

We are rather worried in Assam about the intrusion of Communist workers who are chiefly to be found in the Bengalee personnel on our railway. Through these influences discipline on our railway is very bad and this spirit has its effect among the workers of such industries as we have, principally the tea industry. There is now the likelihood of Communist workers finding West Bengal too hot for them trying to seek shelter with their relatives or friends among the Bengalee personnel on our railway. We will of course try to catch these people as they come in, but you know that if there are sympathetic elements among the existing employees of the railway our actions will be largely frustrated. The remedy, as we see it here, is to tighten up control of the Railway Headquarters office at Pandu over its employees and through it of its subordinate offices at Lumding and elsewhere. There is at present a good deal of slackness at Pandu. While your Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Basu, is a pleasant enough man, he is not by general repute strong enough to cope with the deteriorating discipline among the railway staff. I think what is required is for Basu to be succeeded by some railway officer from Madras or Bombay, who with the backing of the Railway Board would be strong enough to take a firm line with the subversive elements among the railway employees here.

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I am very sorry to have to make this complaint and it has not been pleasant for me to write this letter; at the same time, I feel that weakness in our railway direction here causes grave hurt to the well-being of the province; and therefore it is my duty to bring it to your notice in the hope that you will take remedial action. I have not based by letter on rumours but on facts which have come to the notice of my Ministers from time to time. If you would like an enquiry made, any officer whom you may depute in this regard will receive every assistance from my Government.

I may add that Bardoloi is in complete agreement with what I have written above.

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Dr. John Matthai, CIE
Minister for Railways
Government of India
New Delhi

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
13 April 1948

Bardoloi
Premier
Shillong (Assam)

WITH REFERENCE YOUR LETTER DATED 13 JANUARY TO PYARELAL[1] PLEASE DESPATCH 5000 MAUNDS PADDY FOR RELIEF TO DISTRICT MAGISTRATE NOAKHALI. LETTER FOLLOWS. PYARELAL WITH ME AT PRESENT. WIRE REPLY.

VALLABHBHAI

[1] Secretary to Gandhi; author of several books on Gandhi's life and works

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TELEGRAM

Shillong
14 April 1948

Hon'ble Sardar Patel
New Delhi

RECEIVED YOUR TELEGRAM. PREMIER NOW IN CALCUTTA. HAD ALREADY AGREED SENDING FIVE THOUSAND MAUNDS PADDY FOR NOAKHALI RELIEF AND HAD SENT TELEGRAM REQUESTING FOOD MINISTER FOR EXPORT PERMIT AND PERMIT FOR NOVEMBER OUTSIDE BASIC PLAN. PLEASE EXPEDITE SENDING PERMITS AND REQUEST PYARELALJI SEND REPRESENTATIVE WITH ABOUT FORTYTWO THOUSAND RUPEES TO GAUHATI.

FINANCE MINISTER
ASSAM

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
17 April 1948

Finance Minister
Shillong (Assam)

PERMIT ISSUED. THE OBJECT OF SENDING PADDY THROUGH DISTRICT MAGISTRATE IS TO ENSURE SAFE DELIVERY. PAYMENT WILL FOLLOW. SEND ON ACCOUNT ON RECEIPT TELEGRAM FROM PYARELAL OR CHARUBHUSHAN CHOUDHRY GANDHI CAMP RAMGANJ. WIRE HERE NAMES BOOKING AND TERMINAL STATIONS.

VALLABHBHAI

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Camp Calcutta
19 April 1948

Respected Sardarji,

It is with a sense of great grievance that I am writing this note to you and it is in reference to the Dominion Conference which is about to finish its labour. The Hon'ble Dr. B. C. Roy, Premier of West Bengal, wanted to discuss some points for easing the economic situation which was due to goondaism of Pakistan National Guards and non-observance of ordinary rules of transit and transhipment by Customs officers, etc., and in that connection said that a conference between the Prime Ministers of West and East Bengal Governments and Assam might lead to some kind of settlement of the economic relationship between Eastern Bengal, Western Bengal and between Assam, Tripura and Cooch Behar. In the meantime, the Hon'ble Srijut [K.C.] Neogy wanted me to attend the Inter-Dominion Conference, the agenda even of which was not known to me. Apparently, therefore, all that I had to come to discuss was the economic situation of the province and did not know even what would be the political discussion between the two dominions in all their perspective between Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Cooch Bihar. I was asked to be present at the discussion both in our talks for formulation of points for the Indian Dominion as well as for consideration of points formulated by Pakistan. I had attended these conferences during the last 6-7 days. But I have been so disappointed at the manner in which Assam's case was treated that I have been compelled to bring it to your notice. I have been encouraged in doing so by the advice of the Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee himself. The main grievance that I felt was that in the anxiety to negotiate for East Bengal and West Bengal the peculiar situation of Assam was not taken into consideration and generalisations were proposed to be accepted for implementation by the provinces without the provinces being made to know anything about the fact or being allowed to be ready to face them. I am taking the points one by one:

1. I wanted a declaration by the Pakistan Government that they should discourage associations and bodies inside Pakistan

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from carrying on propaganda for the inclusion of Khasi States and other hill areas on their border into Pakistan. I also wanted them to discourage any kind of immigration into Assam. The leader of the Pakistan delegation did not know the facts. Therefore, he wanted something definite about it. In a letter I gave the definite information. In the meanwhile, Hon'ble Hamidul Haq Chaudhury, of East Bengal, brought a countercharge that we were trying to turn out 5 lakhs of Muslims from Assam for whom they could not take any responsibility. They brought in all manner of charges just as the Muslim League did before. Their present argument is that whatever might be the policy of Assam before partition, East Bengal could not take the responsibility of such people as we might drive them out from Assam. I pointed out to them that there was no question of driving out anybody but we could not surely give settlement to any people who were trying to include Assam in Pakistan, who had broken law and order, and were in many cases committing offences against the law of the land. They said that this is a device adopted by us to drive out the Muslims from Assam; but what appeared to me very regretful is that our Dominion representatives accepted the proposition which the Pakistan delegation put forward, namely, that there would be an inter-Dominion conference on this issue. As the agreement will be signed by the leaders of the two Dominions, I am not in a position to express my dissent also. I have, however, made it clear to the conference that I am opposed to any matter concerning my province being discussed in the inter-Dominion conference without the consent of my Government; I could not undertake the responsibility of committing my Government to a matter in which a major policy of Government was involved. (I am sending a copy of the letter I sent to our delegation for your perusal.)

2. There were several other matters in which the Pakistan delegation, basing on past propaganda, were citing figures about which I knew but little, and yet conclusions which were about to be arrived at by the Dominions were proposed to be thrust for action by Assam without letting the Government of Assam even fully know about it. The attitude taken by me from the very beginning was that the political problems of Bengal alone were to be solved in the conference. But I suddenly found that we agreed to recommend more inter-Dominion conferences regarding Bihar, Bombay, Delhi and UP, and Assam also. The whole attempt on the part of Pakistan seems to me to take over the responsibility of the Muslims of the Dominion into their hands and bring

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them up for implementation by the Provincial Governments or by the Indian Dominion, as the case may be, any grievance they chose to name. To my mind, this will be entirely subversive of all governmental activities in reference to treatment of their minorities. I do not know how in the face of the conclusions that we arrived at in the Constituent Assembly regarding the minorities such questions could be raised. But the Hon'ble Mr. Ghulam Hussain[1] had more than a score of times said that the Constitution was a scrap of paper and that none of the provinces of the Indian Dominion were acting up to it. My main point in making this out to you is that this is the beginning of the creation of further disruption in the provinces in India. In Assam, however, it will have direst of consequences. You very well know how Assam is divided among itself by so many communities and peoples. It required the sacrifice of my life's blood and possibly my life itself to bring about a situation in the province which had gone for peace and harmony among all communities in the province and for preparing it for developmental and constructional work. I now find that all my attempts are going to be in vain, if the conclusions of the Dominion conference are going to be thrust upon provinces like Assam without letting it consider them in Cabinet. To you who has known the province particularly after your visit, I do not want to say anything more. But I say that these conclusions have the tendency to let down Assam at the very initial period of her existence.

3. I feel that the whole thing has been manipulated by the Pakistan delegation in such a way that they are trying to create a propaganda agency outside India to damn the Dominion of India and its component parts, that is, the provinces. The sensible readers of the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly in Assam will find that most of the evils that were mentioned here were not mentioned in the Assembly even by the Muslim Group, and, if they did, they were of such a feeble nature that no reasonable person could take much note of them; yet we have to agree today for a Dominion conference and to agree to remedies for evils which have no factual existence. The whole object of the Pakistan propaganda agency is hereby given a fillip.

I am in very bad health. My heart is possibly damaged beyond repair. Even normal activities bring my heart beat to 100 to 110 per minute. Of late, I am finding it difficult to carry on the heavy responsibilities of the office, and I am feeling that

[1] First Premier of Sind when it separated from Bombay

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I have no alternative but to resign or take long leave unless I can find only lighter work to do for a pretty long time. My normal hours of work were 14 to 16 hours a day. I now feel that I cannot work for more than 8 to 10 hours. I am not feeling satisfied with the work and discharge of responsibilities. I should like to have your personal opinion if I could resign. I do not propose to precipitate this matter but I shall be grateful if you give this matter personal thought and let me know.

I know you are yourself ill and it is rather unkind of me to trouble you now but I have told you the circumstances which compelled me to do so. I have none else to open out my heart.

With best of respects,

Yours sincerely,
Gopinath

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

OFFICIAL LETTER WRITTEN BY MR. GOPINATH BARDOLOI, PREMIER OF ASSAM, TO THE LEADER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, CAMP CALCUTTA

The final draft of the political resolutions has not yet been sent to me and I do not know whether in the resolutions regarding migration and immigration of Muslims outside and into Assam my point of view has been recorded. I made it abundantly clear even at the cost of repetition that I could not bind my Government to any question of major policies without taking any decision on that subject in our Cabinet. It is well known that this question has been a matter of major policy. I could, therefore, bring this question to an inter-Dominion conference only with the consent of my Government. I have no objection to the formula being kept as it is provided either in the beginning of the sentence or towards the end or at whatever portion it would suit, the words "subjct to the Government of Assam agreeing" were incorporated. If, however, the joint delegation do not agree to do so, a note may be kept to the effect that I dissent on the ground that I had no time to consult my Government.

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New Delhi
22 April 1948

My dear Gopinath,

Many thanks for your letter of 19 April 1948.

I am afraid I know little about the Inter-Dominion Conference. I have not had the detailed minutes. I should not, therefore, like to comment on that part of your letter. When we review this matter, I shall bear your letter in mind.

I am very sorry to hear about your ill-health. Assam needs you and we all want you to be at the helm of affairs there. At the same time, your health requires careful attention. I would, therefore, suggest that you need not resign but delegate your functions to other Ministers, keeping in your hands the direction of policy and other essential matters. I would advise you to so regulate this as to leave you with work for five or six hours, so that you can have rest even while you are working. I hope it will be possible for you to accept my advice.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Gopinath Bardoloi
Prime Minister of Assam
Shillong

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New Delhi
22 April 1948

My dear Sir Akbar,

I have received a letter from Bardoloi, of which I give you an extract:

> "I am in very bad health. My heart is possibly damaged beyond repair. Even normal activities bring my heartbeat to 100 to 110 per minute. Of late, I am finding it difficult to carry on the heavy responsibilities of the office and I am feeling that I have no alternative but to

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resign or take long leave unless I can find only lighter work to do for a pretty long time. My normal hours of work were 14 to 16 hours a day. I now feel that I cannot work for more that 8 to 10 hours. I am not feeling satisfied with the work and discharge of responsibilities. I should like to have your personal opinion if I could resign. I do not propose to precipitate this matter, but I shall be grateful if you give this matter personal thought and let me know."

I am rather anxious about him. I think Assam cannot do without him. I have, therefore, suggested to him to so regulate his work that he can manage it within five or six hours, contenting himself with direction of policy and other essential matters. I hope it will be possible for you to look after him and to persuade him to take some rest and not to give up his office.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Sir Akbar Hydari
Shillong

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Shillong
26 April 1948

My dear Sardarji,

Many thanks for your letter dated 22 April regarding Bardoloi. In recent months I have myself been greatly worried about his health. I am trying to do what I can to relieve him of some of the burden of departmental work. It is for this reason I welcomed the appointment of an additional Minister, but unfortunately against both your advice and mine Bardoloi felt compelled to nominate the President of the Provincial Congress Committee in the person of Tayebullah. Tayebullah is hardly any use at all. With the growing developmental activities in Assam I have urged on Bardoloi the appointment of one of his Parliamentary Secretaries, Chaliha,[1] a first rate man, as Minister and put him in charge of some of the portfolios which Bardoloi now holds. Chaliha is trusted by Bardoloi and has a good reputation among the people; but for some party reason, which is not quite clear to me, Bardoloi has so far not accepted my suggestion.

[1] Bimalaprosad Chaliha: Secretary, All India Spinners' Association, Assam branch; detained for two years as security prisoner during 1942 movement; MLA, Assam, 1946; Parliamentary Secretary, 1947; Chairman, Reception Committee of 63rd session of Indian National Congress; Chief Minister, Assam, 1957-58

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I personally am doing what I can to relieve Bardoloi by undertaking on his behalf some of the more important items of business with the Ministries of the Government of India and helping him to get business through our Cabinet. I also do my best to dissuade him from undertaking journeys to Calcutta and Delhi in those cases where another Minister could as well be deputed. For example, the other day, in spite of the poor man's request to be excused, Jairamdas Doulatram[1] insisted on his attending the forthcoming Food Conference. I then sent Jairamdas a telegram on my own begging him to excuse Bardoloi's attendance, especially as the Food Minister, Omeo Kumar Das[2] would be attending the conference on behalf of Assam. I am glad Jairamdas listened to my appeal and so Bardoloi is not going. It would help if invitations from Delhi, except in the most important cases, are so worded as to enable Bardoloi, without feeling that he is wanting in his duty, to send a deputy.

I have also been urging on Bardoloi to take a few days' holiday from time to time but so far without success. The trouble is that Bardoloi alone upholds the prestige of the Ministry; his own personal standing in the province is as high as ever but that of some of his colleagues is rather low and there is therefore the additional strain on him of propping them up.

You may rely on me to do all that I can and for the rest we must depend on Providence. Bardoloi has himself spoken to me of his desire to retire but I have always given him the same answer that at present I can see no suitable successor. It is hard to have to say that to an obviously ailing man, but there is no alternative and one can only try and hope for the best.

I hope this letter will find you in good health. My wife joins me in sending you and Maniben our best wishes for a restful sojourn in Mussoorie. If Bardoloi had by his side a Maniben he would be a much happier man!

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

[1] MLC (Bombay), 1927-29; General Secretary, AICC, 1931-34; member, Congress Working Committee; member, CA, 1946; Bihar Governor, 1947; later Union Minister and Governor, Assam

[2] Secretary, Congress Election Committee, 1936-37; Minister for Supply, Food and Labour, Assam, October 1947; Leader, Indian delegation to ILO, Geneva, 1949; elected MLA, Assam, 1952

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Camp Mangaldai
5 May 1948

Respected Sardarji,

Your very kind letter has touched me and I treasure the kindness with which it has been addressed. It is kind of you to think that Assam needs me and that you all want me to be at the helm of affairs. I am trying my best to follow your advice in reference to getting myself rid of portfolios and delegating my functions to other Ministers. But I have not yet been able to get rid of Home which, I feel, requires my attention even in detail. I am, however, trying to get rid of it as early as possible. I propose to carry the responsibility as long as I can. I only do not know how long I can continue to do so; but blessings of persons like you always inspire me, and I am accepting your advice to the best of my ability.

As regards the main question of the Inter-Dominion Conference, I have already written to you in some detail, but the situation is getting more complex every day. A large number of Muslims and Hindus are entering Assam—Hindus generally to town areas which, as you know, are very small in dimension. The result is that the towns are getting completely overcrowded and being rendered insanitary, with shortage of water supply and other major inconveniences. The Muslims, on the other hand, have entered into the Muslim villages occupied by immigrants migrating to Assam during the last 35 years and are living in the houses of the old immigrants—some as agricultural labour, and others having money are purchasing holdings from the old immigrants. The subject of migration and immigration is a Central one and the Government of Assam have to look with callousness and even with dismay at the onrush of these people. The ingress of Hindu immigrants has been mainly due to fear complex on the one hand and the discriminatory treatment by the Pakistan Government against the richer section of the people. The exercise of option by officers, against which I protested so strongly, has been another very important reason [for] this immigration. This immigration of Hindus into India can therefore be understood. But the immigration of large numbers of Muslims is

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indeed very difficult to explain unless we read it in the perspective of what Pakistan is doing in Hyderabad and Kashmir and what Pakistan aspired after in respect of Assam before the partition of India. We have therefore come to the conclusion that if Assam is to continue as part of India it must be allowed to exercise the power of restricting the ingress of people, not only for avoiding an economic breakdown of the province but also for maintaining communal harmony which has so long been maintained in spite of Hindus and Muslims from outside trying to create a communal war. My Secretary has accordingly requested your Secretariat to give us powers to take appropriate action to prevent immigration of undesirable people into Assam. It has been pointed out in that connection the appropriate way in which it could be done. You surely know the many problems of Assam; how the hills people will take any occasion for breach with the Government of Assam and work for separation under any plea. You also know the susceptibilities of the tribals of both the hills and plains against any kind of interference in their land. Already certain agencies like the Ahom Sabha are secretly but deeply at work to create this disruption. All these facts are not understood by people from outside, not even by some members of your Cabinet. In a Cabinet meeting, here to which Sir Akbar Hydari was invited, he expressed the opinion that we should not go to the Inter-Dominion Conference and create problems which may baffle any solution by the Government of Assam. I have written to Shriyut [K.C.] Neogy also in that vein, but the matter must ultimately be decided, I think, by your Cabinet. And my humble prayer to you is that you [should] bear these problems of Assam in your mind before accepting any decision. I shall write further on the subject. In the meantime, accept my grateful thanks for your kind concern about my health.

With deepest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gopinath Bardoloi

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Shillong
26 May 1948

Respected Sardarji,

On 22 May I came to know for the first time that Shriyut Debeswar Sarmah,[1] the present Dominion Agent in Manipur, was given notice to quit his office. As I felt that Sir Akbar Hydari did not consult me before taking this final step—to me of such vital importance—I addressed a letter to him on the very same day giving my reactions on the step taken by him. I am sending herewith a copy of the same in order to acquaint you with my feelings over the matter. On the 24th I had a conversation with him, in which he explained to me the whole circumstances leading to this situation. He had of course given an indication of his feeling against the action of the Dominion Agent some time ago twice or thrice, and also the State Ministry's decision not to have a Dominion Agent in Manipur at all. But I never thought that he had already given Shriyut Sarmah notice of this fact. The position as it now stands is that as a result of the communication by Sir Akbar Hydari of the State Ministry's decision to abolish that post, Shriyut Sarmah has already asked himself to be relieved from his post from 12 June. Sir Akbar's action has put me in such a position that no room is left for me but to tender my resignation.

2. There is no doubt in my mind that the allegations against Shriyut Sarmah acting against the interest of the Dominion of India are entirely baseless. It may be true that he might have been indiscreet in one or two things, by which he had incurred the displeasure of the Chief Minister of Manipur and also of H.E., but, in my opinion, they were surely not of such a character by which any reasonable inference of his acting against the Union Government could be drawn, or any action could be justified on that ground. I can guarantee on his behalf that he could not have a better interest than any one of us to serve the Dominion of India. On the other hand, I feel that he has apparently been disliked by Sir Akbar only due to his anxiety to maintain the prestige of the Government of India as against the State. I have

[1] Chief whip of Congress Party in Assam Legislative Assembly

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found also that some attempts were made to tar him as a corrupt man. But I have found that while we (I include thereby Sir Akbar Hydari) realise that rumours are possible to be manufactured, there was hardly any fact from which reasonable suspicion about his corruption could be drawn. It therefore appears to me quite clear that on this ground also Shriyut Sarmah should not have been so lightly deprived of his office. The third ground, as has been explained to me by Sir Akbar Hydari, was that the State Ministry wanted to abolish this post on the ground of expensiveness. I, however, differ and have always differed from Sir Akbar Hydari on this point. I thought that whatever may be the position of other States, at no time could I change my opinion about the necessity of keeping a man of a keen political sense to be in touch with the day-to-day developments in the Naga Hills, Naga Tribal areas and Manipur. And if there was necessity for it at the time when Shriyut Debeswar Sarmah was appointed, the necessity for it has now become all the more greater. The only solid party in Manipur is the Communist Party. I have definite information that the Naga National Council is being instigated by the Communists to cut its connection with the Dominion of India. Across the frontier of Assam, only the other day a desperate fight took place between the Communists and the Government of Burma for securing power. It has therefore been absolutely necessary that these trends towards separation should be observed from day to day and the Dominion Government and the Government of Assam should be kept appraised of them. I therefore pointed out to Sir Akbar Hydari whenever this question was raised that a man of political sagacity should have been retained there. I must also most emphatically point out that any attempt to encourage the State of Manipur to feel that they are free to do as they like would also encourage the Nagas to do as they like. While, therefore, I am perfectly agreeable to allow complete autonomy to the State of Manipur, I would not like the State Government to feel that all it should do is to satisfy the Governor of Assam personally and should have no other consideration for their conduct. I need point out that only recently the Government of Manipur was responsible for detaining three hon'ble members of the Dominion Parliament for three hours on the road from Kohima to Manipur, which is a Dominion road. I sent a telegram to the Chief Minister to meet them, but it seems to me that he completely disregarded the request that I made. I am myself feeling belittled by this attitude. Frankly speaking, excepting for certain reports that are sent to me by the Adviser to the

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Governor, I know nothing about what is happening in Manipur, Tripura or Cooch Behar. I do not indeed know how is the Premier to advise the Governor if he has no data on which advice can be given. Never has the Chief Minister of Manipur ever seen me or let me know the conditions of things there, although he is visiting Government House not quite unoften. I therefore come to the conclusion that the Chief Minister of Manipur has been made to belittle not only the Dominion Agent who, till his release, is the India Government's own agent, but the Provincial Government's also.

3. Apart from these facts, I feel that in removing Mr. Sarmah I have been made to act with certain degree of treachery and indirectly to my party along with it. With what face can I meet them and carry on the Government with their assistance? If Sir Akbar in the remotest of his thoughts considered that the post could be abolished under any circumstances I would never have persuaded him to give up his high office.

4. In the circumstances stated above, I see no other alternative but to tender my resignation, which I am sending along with a copy of this letter to Sir Akbar.

5. While discussing these matters with Sir Akbar Hydari, he had in all generosity said that instead of causing embarrassment to me he would rather resign himself. But I told him the reasons why it would not be proper for him to do so. I feel that in any case I should have to resign whatever he did. Therefore there can be no point in his so doing. He has on the whole served Assam very well, and has identified himself with the well-being of the people; and his wife has ably stood by his side. But so far as I am concerned, I have become unable to carry on for reasons of my health; and although my resignation is expedited by this unforeseen fact it can be explained to be due to my health, and avoid unnecessary fuss and talk about this resignation in public.

With deep regard and respects,

Yours sincerely,
Gopinath

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Dehra Dun
30 May 1948

My dear Bardoloi,

Many thanks for your letter of 26 May 1948. It is unfortunate that you took such a serious view of the termination of the post of Dominion Agent at Manipur. It was after very careful consideration that I myself accepted the suggestion that the post should be terminated. I did not myself much like the idea of this post when it was created. Even more than this, I did not like the particular person suggested. But in deference to your wishes I agreed to that appointment. Experience has confirmed that it has proved most unfortunate. It is for this reason that both the appointment and the post are being terminated.

2. I am sorry that you are taking such a provincial view of the State of Manipur. The problem of Manipur has its wider aspects, of which we are all very keenly alive. I can assure you that we have full regard for the interests of Assam, but I do not see how this matter should have involved previous consultation with you. In any case, at the time the appointment was made nobody could have foreseen that it would have to be terminated so soon. There is therefore no question of any treachery or any devious means being involved. Your conscience need not prick on this issue. The responsibility is mine; I am prepared to face it.

3. I am sorry that its repercussions should be felt by you in provincial politics. I am sure you will be the first to recognise that in the past we have faced even worse crisis and have emerged successfully. I see no reason why you should throw up your hands in this one. If you need any support from me in dealing with the repercussion, it will be forthcoming in full measure.

4. I hope in the light of this remark you will withdraw your resignation; but of course if you wish to resign on grounds of health, in spite of my advice to the contrary and because the little relaxation that you have permitted yourself is not adequate, I feel I cannot dissuade [you] further. I should be the last person to be a party to the ruination of your health. In that case, I would suggest that you wait for some time before you take that step,

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and in the meantime you might suggest alternative arrangements. I am convinced that if you resign on the issue of the Dominion Agent at Manipur you have really no case.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Gopinath Bardoloi
Shillong

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Shillong
24 May 1948

My dear Sardarji,

It is some time since I last wrote to you, and it may possibly interest you to know how we have been faring with the States in this little corner of India.

2. Relations with the Khasi States and the States of Manipur, Tripura and Cooch Behar, while providing administrative and economic headaches almost continuously, confront me at present with no political problems. The Khasi States, because of the factious and volatile character of the Khasi people, may be likened to a cauldron always on the point of boiling; but it does not boil over, unless of course one does something very stupid. A firm, honest and straightforward policy has, if I may say so, got us safely through the separationist fever which afflicted these States, as it did other tribal areas in varying degrees. I am now implementing the undertaking I gave them at the time when they signed the Instrument of Accession that chiefs who had lost the support of the people would have to make way for successors who had it. I have laid down, however, that before a Siem can be deposed there should be a clear two-thirds majority of votes against him. Both the States Federation executive and the Khasi-Jaintia Federated State National Conference (the popular body) have after some discussion accepted it as a salutary safeguard against too frequent changes of the incumbency of a Siemship. Once a Siem is deposed by this process a bare majority is sufficient in the subsequent election for a new Siem.

3. Tripura, whose main trouble has been harassment by East Bengal National Guards, or a more appropriate term would be blackguards, is now breathing a little more freely following the Inter-Dominion Agreement at Calcutta and also because of the

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proximity of the Assam Rifles, a small force of which I still keep there with a promise that more will be flown in if they start their fun and games again.

4. Cooch Behar so far has presented no problem except an acute shortage of coal which I am trying to remedy. I hope to visit this State some time next month to see things for myself and also to try and put a little more speed into the making of the Assam and Cooch Behar part of the access road which has been completed but is still, so I am informed by General Nathu Singh, in a none too good condition.

5. In Manipur, preparations are now well advanced for the holding of elections on the basis of adult franchise, and it is likely that a fully responsible government will be in operation in the State by the end of June. This was one of the conditions of my agreement with the Maharaja last year; and I must say that his Chief Minister, who is his brother Maharajkumar Priyabrata Singh, with a distinguished war record, has loyally implemented this undertaking. The institution of full responsible government in Manipur is a step fraught with considerable danger, but I am confident that with the reserve powers vested in me under the agreement we will get through the inevitable teething troubles without a major upset in the administrative machinery. Once they are overcome I hope that the turbulent spirit of the Manipuris, especially their womenfolk, will be diverted to more constructive purposes than has been the case in the past. In recent times there was the case of the Resident and the Chief of the State Police being held prisoners in the Treasury at Imphal by a band of unarmed but none the less terrifying Manipuri amazons. One cannot help liking these people, but one hopes that with the coming of responsibility some of their more lawless instincts will be restrained.

While on the subject of Manipur I must say a few words about Debeswar Sarmah. His activities, as your Ministry probably guessed from my comments on his fortnightly reports, were getting increasingly mischievous. He was giving encouragement (1) to the leaders of the secessionist movement among the State tribals, (2) was trying to upset the arrangement under which the Tulihal airfield and a suitable area surrounding it would be handed over to us in return for the old British reserve and (3) was taking an active part in the manoeuvres of the various parties in Manipur, adding to the confused politics which are a constant affliction to the State Government. All these activities were doing no good either to India or to Assam, and so taking advantage of the

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authority given me by you I gave him notice of the abolition of the Dominion Agency in Manipur and enquiring when it would be convenient for him to lay down his office. He has replied intimating 12 June as a suitable date; this I have accepted and am making necessary arrangements for the safety of our property, records, etc.

This action of mine brought on my head a somewhat violent reaction from Bardoloi. I sympathise with his feelings, because Sarmah's leaving the post of Dominion Agent, Manipur, again, so Bardoloi said, sets him free to work against the Ministry. Sarmah now proposes to stand for the presidency of the Provincial Congress Committee vacated by Tayebullah on his appointment as a Minister. I have had a long and friendly meeting with Bardoloi today. I told him that in my view Sarmah was more dangerous to the Ministry from the vantage point of his position as Dominion Agent, Manipur, which he used for all he was worth in entertaining the Ministry's opponents and in other ways. Moreover, it was not the case that as Dominion Agent he confined himself to Manipur but took frequent journeys, without permission, to Jorhat, which is one of the main centres of opposition to the Ministry, being the chief town in Upper Assam. There is a feeling in Upper Assam that it has been somewhat neglected owing to the Ministry's fondness for Gauhati and Lower Assam. Bardoloi did not agree with me that Sarmah was just as harmful to the Ministry as Dominion Agent as he will be now without the added prestige and means which that position gave him. But it was a friendly disagreement, and I cannot help feeling that in his heart of hearts Bardoloi knows that I am right. He asked me whether I saw any objection to his writing to you on this matter, and I said that of course I had none whatever. I feel very sorry indeed that I have been the cause of giving Bardoloi pain; I am beginning to feel for him, as one does for a brother, but one has to give a brother pain when family interests so dictate. I think Sarmah's removal was such a case and I hope that I am not mistaken in my view that I acted in the best interests of India and Assam. It was not a pleasant step to take.

I suppose you have gone to Mussoorie in preference to coming to Shillong because the former is nearer Delhi and an easier place for consultations. My wife and I hope, however, that you and Maniben will pay us a visit later in the year. Please do. We hope that in your health you are now proceeding from strength to strength.

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With kind regards to you and Maniben,

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Government House
Shillong
27 May 1948

My dear Sardarji,

This is in continuation of my letter to you of 24 May in which I gave you a general review of conditions in the States within the orbit of Assam. The reason for so soon troubling you again is that I have just now received a letter of resignation dated 26 May from Bardoloi (copy enclosed) in which he pleads on reasons of health, as well as because of his irritation at Debeswar Sarmah's removal from the office of Dominion Agent, to be relieved of his office. He has been good enough to send me a copy of his letter to you of 26 May.

I enclose a copy of my reply to him. The matter now rests with you.

I advise you in all sincerity that you should not allow him to resign the premiership but at the same time tell him to go on two or three months' rest appointing a deputy in his place for this period. This deputy need not be called premier but carry on the current duties of the premiership, as has been done in the past during Bardoloi's protracted absence in Delhi for meetings of the Constituent Assembly. There are two possible deputies—Bishnuram Medhi[1] and Omeo Kumar Das. Of the two, Omeo Kumar is the better man but I do not think we should pass Medhi over for him. Medhi has always acted for Bardoloi during the latter's absence and there would be a great domestic row if he were now to be passed over. Medhi is not very loyal to Bardoloi and he is also in other ways a difficult man to deal with as his horizon is so limited and narrow; but with a proper directive from you I think I will be able to manage him until Bardoloi returns restored in health after two or three months. Much of Bardoloi's letter to you might give the impression that he and I have been

[1] Joined non-co-operation movement and imprisoned in 1921; President, Assam PCC; Minister of Finance, Revenue and Legislation, Assam, 1946-50; Chief Minister, Assam, 1950-58; Governor of Madras, 1958-64

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rowing, but the fact is that our relations continue to be of the friendliest. Indeed, he has never once complained (nor has he indeed had any reason to complain to me) that he is not kept informed of developments in Manipur, Tripura and Cooch Behar. I can only deduce from this that he is really a sick man and worries himself over fancied grievances which do not in fact exist. During my time in Assam there have been two or three previous occasions on which he has flown into a rage and fired off tempestuous letters. But this is the first time that he has actually gone to the length of handing in his resignation.

So far as my personal position is concerned, I shall of course act as you wish. From my personal point of view I would prefer to have a suitable assignment abroad in Europe where I could be nearer my elder daughter who is studying architecture in England; but if you feel that for the present my duty lies in Assam I shall abide by your wishes. You must please decide whatever is in the best interests of our country.

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE I

LETTER DATED 26 MAY 1948 FROM GOPINATH BARDOLOI, PREMIER OF ASSAM, TO SIR AKBAR HYDARI, GOVERNOR OF ASSAM

I am hereby tendering my resignation of the office of premiership of Assam. You very well know how I have been suffering from ill-health for the last two or three months, making it necessary for me, according to doctor's advice, to take more rest than my office could give me. But in place of rest the sense of responsibility and anxiety and worry involved in discharging the same have prevented me from getting the much-needed rest. It seems to me now that I cannot carry on the work any longer.

You of course know that the Congress Party commands an overwhelming majority in the House, and that the next premier must be from that party. They may take a little time to convene the meeting of their party to select their leader. I therefore wish that the resignation should take effect from 21 June, which will be after a meeting also of the Provincial [Congress] Committee. This would avoid fuss and unnecessary talk outside. I hope you will let me know that you have accepted my resignation.

I shall seek the opportunity of saying final good-bye to you; but in the meantime accept my thanks for the co-operation that you gave in the discharge of my duties.

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ENCLOSURE II

Shillong
27 May 1948

My dear Mr. Bardoloi,

I have just received your letter of 26 May and am very distressed at its contents. I feel that I cannot accept your resignation of the office of premiership of Assam till we know what are the Sardar's reactions to your letter of 26 May. I know that both he and Panditji, as indeed do I, regard your continuance as Premier of Assam to be in the highest interest of Assam and India, and it would be wrong on my part to accept your resignation until we know the Sardar's reactions to your letter of the 26th, a copy of which you have been good enough to send me. In the circumstances I would request you to be good enough not even to mention the fact that you have tendered your resignation until you hear from the Sardar.

If as I think you should continue in the premiership it is imperative that for reasons of health you should have some rest; a rest for two or three months as you have been advised and which I have often asked you to take, though not for such a long period. To help us there is the well-known constitutional expedient under which a premier entrusts his work to a trusted colleague and himself takes a rest cure as ordered by the doctor. I suggest that you should follow this course of action. Apart from my personal respect and, if I may say so, affection for you which impels me to advise you to take this course, there is a reason of public policy which also points in the same direction. It is that the Ministry will lose greatly in strength and prestige in Assam if you leave it; and indeed I doubt whether it will be strong enough without you to weather the internal strains and stresses which are bound to arise.

Now as regards Mr. Debeswar Sarmah. I thought I had convinced your reason though not your heart that his continuance as Dominion Agent in Manipur was injurious to India and to Assam. I did not start with any prejudice against him. In fact, I quite liked him. But it was the experience of his crooked ways which made me come to the conclusion that he was unfit to hold the office of Dominion Agent. Had he done his work quietly and without intrigue I would have advised the States Ministry to let the agency continue till he himself went away or could otherwise be provided for; but his activities, especially in the matter of the hill tribes' agitation to secede from Manipur and in the domestic politics of the State, convinced me that his continued residence in the State would lead to trouble for us; and so I

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acted as I did. You will admit that during the last few months I have made my views regarding him and his activities quite plain to you. The reason that I have not pursued the various allegations of corruption against him is not because I am convinced that they are untrue but because of the difficulty of probing into them without raising a public stink. This, just now when charges of corruption are in the air, I consider inexpedient to do, especially when there was a perfectly good reason of public policy to dispense with his services. Please remember also that I have treated him in the matter of his going with every courtesy. I asked him when it would be convenient for him to lay down his office and it is he who fixed the date 12 June.

I really do not think that you are right when you say in your letter to the Sardar that you do not know anything of what is happening in Manipur, Tripura or Cooch Behar. You get copies of reports from these three States together with my comments which are sent to the Ministry of States; Priyabrata of Manipur has met you on most occasions when he has come to Shillong. Chatterjee of Tripura also sees you. Singh, the Dewan of Cooch Behar, has only come once to Shillong when the Sardar was here; besides, I take the opportunity when we meet of mentioning to you happenings in these States as I do in respect of the Khasi States.

Let us, however, abide by what the Sardar says, and till then please let us keep this matter to ourselves.

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Shriyut Gopinath Bardoloi

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Dehra Dun
2 June 1948

My dear Sir Akbar,

Thank you for your letter of 27 May 1948 which apparently seems to have crossed my letter of 30 May 1948 with which I enclosed a copy of my reply to Bardoloi.

2. There is no question whatsoever of your leaving Assam. I am quite convinced the province requires your ability and administrative experience and that it has already benefited from it and should continue to do so in future.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Sir Akbar Hydari
Shillong

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Congress House
P.O. Gauhati
(Assam)
27 May 1948

Revered Sardarji,

I am writing this letter to you on a very important matter affecting every one of us as also the Provincial Congress Committee.

You must have received a letter from Shri Bardoloi intimating his desire to relinquish his office of Premiership. This decision has been taken mainly on two grounds, viz.:

1. Abolition of the post of Dominion Agent in Manipur without his knowledge and relieving the present Agent.
2. His present ill-health.

He has of course been keeping indifferent health for some time. But the first issue accelerated his decision and I desire to point out to you a few points on that count.

Shri Bardoloi must have written to you about the most important part Manipur plays hemmed in by Burma on one side and various other hill tribes including the Nagas on the other. And considering all factors we also share the same view with Shri Bardoloi regarding the desirability of retaining the post of Dominion Agent.

You will find from Bardoloi's letter that he would have carried on his office for some time if this factor had not accelerated his decision. But after the recent development if his resignation is accepted it will be taken that he has been allowed to resign on account of his differences with the Governor and it will affect the prestige of the elected Premier as also the Congress organization. When the facts about the resignation will be known there will be great resentment in the province including the PCC. The Provincial Congress Committee is meeting on 13 June 1948, and this matter may then come up for discussion, and it is as well likely that a resolution may be adopted demanding the recall of the Governor. In that case a piquant situation will arise and it will be embarrassing for you as well as for us.

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In these circumstances, I, as an humble servant of the nation connected with the PCC for a pretty long time, humbly beg to suggest as follows:

i. Recall of the Governor before there is any further development and public agitation. It may be quite possible for you to take him from this province.

ii. Bardoloi may be asked to remain without any portfolio for such time until his medical adviser thinks otherwise.

It will be a most unpopular act to ask the elected Premier to resign on differences with the Governor when consequent upon such differences resignation is tendered.

I hope you will treat this matter as most urgent and give your careful thought to it. An indication of the line of the solution may be kindly communicated either to the Premier or to me before the PCC meets on 13 June so that it may be possible to meet any emergent situation.

With profound regards,

Yours sincerely,
S. Sarma
General Secretary

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Dehra Dun
3 June 1948

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter of 27 May 1948. The question of a Dominion Agent at Manipur has nothing to do with the provincial Government. The Government acts in such matters as the Agent of the Dominion Government and consultation with the Ministry is merely informal, and there can be no question of the Governor acting on the advice of the Ministers in this matter. The Ministry can therefore have no grievance if anything is done contrary to its wishes, nor can it be a matter of confidence.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Siddhinath Sarma
General Secretary
Assam Provincial Congress Committee
P.O. Gauhati (Assam)

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Gauhati
21 June 1948

The Hon'ble Sardarji Patel
Minister for States
New Delhi

Revered Sardarji,

I have the honour to forward herewith to you copies of the two resolutions adopted unanimously by the Assam Provincial Congress Committee at a secret session held on 14 June 1948. No introduction to the resolutions is necessary as their texts will speak for themselves. The Assam PCC hope that you will kindly give due consideration to the issue involved and inform them of your decision.

I hope you will be kind enough to acknowledge receipt of this letter and oblige.

Yours sincerely,
Jogen Saikia
Secretary, Assam PCC

ENCLOSURE

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE SECRET SESSION OF THE ASSAM PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION No. 1

The Assam Provincial Congress Committee heard the relevant portions of the correspondence of Shri Gopinath Bardoloi with H.E. the Governor of Assam and the Hon'ble Sardar Patel, regarding the abolition of the Dominion Agency at Manipur, and took into consideration the constitutional position involved in the resignation of the Premier. The Committee endorse hereby the protest made by the resignation; but since the entire responsibility for this action has been taken by the Hon'ble Member in charge of the States Ministry, the Committee do not feel that any useful purpose would now be served by his pressing the resignation for acceptance. The Committee however are most seriously concerned to find that the Hon'ble Sardarji in his letter to the Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee refuses to give the

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Ministry and the Provincial Government any right to tender advice to the Governor. This, in the opinion of this Committee, is against the spirit of the Constitution, if not the letter; and so far as Assam and in that context India is concerned this right of advice is essential. Assam is surrounded by foreign States and hill tribes on all sides. Their relationship with India is through the province; and any actions taken have serious repercussion on the province and India. It was expected that places like Khasi and Jaintia Hills States and Tribal areas of the other Hills and States would have developed a greater tendency for cohesion with Assam and India, if a more forward policy was adopted.

In view of the above circumstances, the Committee resolve that the right of advice to the Governor and through him to the Hon'ble Member of the State in reference to the policy of general administration and relationship of the States and the tribal areas with the rest of India should be inherent in the Ministry and that with a view to making this position clear to the Hon'ble Sardarji a deputation should wait on him. The Committee further resolve that the same deputation should meet the Hon'ble Premier of the Dominion Government of India and the President, Indian National Congress. In the meantime the resignation tendered by the Premier may not be pressed for acceptance.

The Committee regret to note the condition of the Premier's health; but it is the considered opinion of this Committee that he should carry on as long as he can, relieving himself of his portfolios as for such period of rest and leave as may be required by the condition of his health.

Resolution No. 2

This Committee have heard certain matters regarding the administration of the Dominion Agency at Manipur; the General Secretary of Assam PCC has also mentioned certain matters which he heard from His Excellency the Governor of Assam. The Committee consider it desirable that a sub-committee consisting of the following should be formed to discuss with His Excellency and Shri Sarmah, the outgoing Dominion Agent at Manipur, to study the facts from them, if possible in the presence of each other, and report the same to the Working Committee of the Assam PCC.

Members of the Deputation:

(1) Shri Lakheshwar Barua (2) Shri Kumud Ram Bora
(3) Shri Siddhinath Sarma (4) Shri Bijoy Chandra Bhagavati

(The same members will act as the sub-committee as mentioned in resolution No. 2.)

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Camp Dehra Dun
5 July 1948

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 June 1948 addressed to Sardar Patel. He will be glad to receive your deputation in Delhi at a time and date which may be fixed in consultation with me. Please let me know about which time it would be convenient for your deputation to come.

Yours faithfully,
V. Shankar

Shri Jogen Saikia
Secretary
Assam Provincial Congress Committee
Congress House
Gauhati

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Shillong
4 June 1948

My dear Sardarji,

Many thanks for your letter of 30 May, which I presume is also a reply to my letter of 27 May. I am very grateful for your confidence in me which is a great comfort. Your letter to Bardoloi is just the help I needed.

My relations with Bardoloi continue as friendly as before, and in his talks with me subsequent to his letters to you and me he has not again referred to the topic of his contemplated resignation.

On my part I am doing everything I can to get him to muster his forces to defeat Debeswar Sarmah's attempt to capture the presidentship of the Provincial Congress Committee. I have fully explained matters leading to the serving of notice on Debeswar Sarmah to Medhi and Omeo Kumar Das, who are the principal Ministers after Bardoloi. They both agreed that there were good

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grounds for sending Sarmah away; and asked me if I would explain the position to Dr. Bhubaneswar Barua, one of the more prominent Congress leaders in Assam, and Siddhinath Sarma, secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee. This might, they think, counteract the hard luck story which, as was to be expected, Debeswar Sarmah is spreading to attract support for his candidature for the presidentship. I have of course readily agreed, and both Dr. Barua and Siddhinath Sarma are seeing me on the 7th.

My wife thanks you and Maniben for your kind messages and joins me in sending you both our best wishes for your happiness and health.

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

PS.

I would be glad if you would please drop the "Sir Akbar" for plain "Hydari" in your letters to me. I am after all very much your junior in all respects!

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Shillong
22 June 1948

Respected Sardarji,

I am sorry that as I wanted to consult the Provincial Congress Committee over the matter of my resignation I could not reply to your letter earlier. As a result of the reaction [to] the removal of Shri Debeswar Sarmah from the Dominion Agency, he was, I believe, elected president of the Provincial Congress without any opposition. I hear that there [was] some propaganda in justification of Shri Sarmah's action which possibly the members of the Provincial Congress Committee took into consideration in his election. But the committee itself was reasonable enough to come to the conclusion that since you have taken upon yourself the entire responsibility for the action of the Governor what the committee had to do was to represent to you the necessity of maintaining in the Ministry the right of advice to the Governor as an inherent right of the Ministry, the overriding power, however, as usual remaining with you. They have therefore proposed a deputation to meet you and convince you of the necessity of this action.

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In view of the fact that the entire responsibility for this action was taken up by you, they were also of the same opinion as your good self, viz., that I should not press my resignation for acceptance. They resolved that I should relieve myself of all portfolios and avail of such period of rest and leave that may be required by the condition of my health. But they also insisted that I should carry on as Premier as long as possible for me to do so. All this has been in consonance with your kind advice and direction to me. I have accordingly decided that I should not press my resignation for acceptance and that I should go for rest with a kind of leave for about two months. I had in the meantime got myself examined by a board of doctors who have tendered the same advice about my future activities as you have been very graciously pleased to give. I could inform you that nothing would please me more than to serve India and Assam at this critical period; but God alone will decide how long I could continue to do so!

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Gopinath Bardoloi

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Dehra Dun
26 June 1948

My dear Bardoloi,

Many thanks for your letter of 22 June 1948. I am glad you have decided to withdraw your resignation and are proceeding on leave for rest. I have no doubt that the decisions which you have reached are in the interests of your province and you will never regret these decisions.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Gopinath Bardoloi
Shillong

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Shillong
29 June 1948

My dear Sardarji,

In his letter to you of 22 June withdrawing his resignation, Bardoloi referred to a deputation from the Provincial Congress Committee to represent to you "the necessity of maintaining in the Ministry the right of advice to the Governor as an inherent right of the Ministry in matters concerning the States." I received this deputation consisting of Shri Bejoy Chandra Bhagavati, Shri Kumudchandra Barah and Shri Siddhinath Sarma, at Gauhati on my way from Cooch Behar on the 27th. They agreed on the facts I put to them that Debeswar Sarmah's removal was justified and informed me that it was doubtful if they would have elected him as President had they known these facts before and had Debeswar Sarmah's propaganda not bounced the two other candidates for the post—Shri Bejoy Chandra Bhagavati and one other—into withdrawing at the last moment! To this I replied that from the outset I had told Bardoloi that I would be quite prepared to meet them all and explain the position if they so wished, but that they had not taken advantage of this offer and so they were themselves to blame for his election. They said that they would see that Debeswar Sarmah was prevented from doing any mischief as President of the Assam Provincial Congress Committee; but I doubt their ability or courage to do so!

When I found that the deputation were favourably impressed I made an appeal to them not to worry you with this matter in the sense referred to by Bardoloi when you were not completely recovered and had far graver preoccupations. I added that at the present time you were Assam's biggest benefactor and it would be unfortunate if anything were done to diminish your great goodwill towards Assam and the sympathetic solution of her problems. They asked how they could cancel the resolution of their Committee. I replied that they need not go to that length, but just let the matter drop on some excuse or other, e.g. your being at Dehra Dun or being too busy with graver matters of all-India importance. They seemed to fall in with my advice but one can never be sure of the sincerity of some of them, especially

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Siddhinath Sarma who is the Congress Secretary and Debeswar Sarmah's friend and confidant, at least so I am told. I know that Bardoloi hopes they won't worry you; as a matter of fact, I spoke to them on this matter with Bardoloi's willing concurrence.

With my kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
A. Hydari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
10 July 1948

My dear Hydari,

Thank you for your letter of 29 June regarding Debeswar Sarmah's case. In the meantime, I have received a letter from the Secretary of the Congress Committee. I have told him that I would be glad to meet their deputation. If the Congress deputation is satisfied with your exposition of the case, I suppose they won't bother me, but if they do, I shall be willing to meet them and tell them exactly how I feel about it.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Sir Akbar Hydari
Shillong

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TELEGRAM

Shillong
9 September 1948

Shankar Esq.
Private Secy. to Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

PLEASE WIRE URGENTLY IF API REPORT THAT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE HAS DECIDED ON CONSTITUTION OF SEPARATE BILINGUAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE FOR CACHAR MANIPUR AND TRIPURA TOGETHER CORRECT. MY PREMIER VERY WORRIED IF THAT IS DECISION OF CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE.

HYDARI GOVERNOR

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
10 September 1948

Hydari
Governor
Shillong

THANKS YOUR TELEGRAM OF 9 SEPTEMBER. PRESS REPORT ABOUT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE DECISION IS CORRECT BUT SARDAR FEELS THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR WORRY AND UNABLE APPRECIATE PREMIER'S OBJECTIONS. NO POLITICAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE SIGNIFICANCE IS ATTACHED TO IT.

SHANKAR

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TELEGRAM

Shillong
29 December 1948

Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

DEEPLY REGRET TO ANNOUNCE SUDDEN DEATH OF H.E. SIR AKBAR HYDARI GOVERNOR ASSAM LAST EVENING IN CAMP NEAR IMPHAL DUE TO STROKE.

CHIEF SECRETARY
ASSAM

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
29 December 1948

Lady Hydari
Governor's Camp
Assam

SHOCKED AND GRIEVED TO HEAR OF YOUR HUSBAND'S SUDDEN UNTIMELY DEATH WHICH WE ALL MOURN WITH YOU. TO ME LOSS IS OF

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PERSONAL FRIEND WHOSE WISE COUNSEL I ALWAYS VALUED AND FOR WHOM I HAD GREAT REGARD. AN ABLE ADMINISTRATOR, GENEROUS AND WARM-HEARTED FRIEND, A CONFIRMED AND CONVINCED NATIONALIST HE WAS A TOWER OF STRENGTH TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF ASSAM AND MOST VALUED COLLEAGUE TO ALL OF US HERE. HE LEAVES A VOID WHICH IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO FILL. HIS MEMORY WE SHALL ALL CHERISH WITH GRATITUDE. YOUR LOSS IS LOSS OF PROVINCE AND COUNTRY AND I PRAY GOD GIVES YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN FAITH AND FORTITUDE TO BEAR YOUR IRREPARABLE LOSS. MANIBEN AND I SEND YOU ALL OUR SINCEREST CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHIES. MAY DEPARTED SOUL REST IN PEACE.

VALLABHBHAI

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CHAPTER IV

POWER POLITICS IN WEST BENGAL

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TELEGRAM

Uttarpara
[Calcutta]
10 February 1948

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Premier
New Delhi

IT WOULD BE TRAGEDY FOR WEST BENGAL THE BORDER PROVINCE IF PRAFULLA GHOSH[1] BE APPOINTED PREMIER WHEN EAST BENGAL RAISING A FORCE OF LAKHS. PLEASE DO NOT FORCE HIM DOWN UNWILLING WEST BENGAL THROATS. HIS LAST MINISTRY WAS UTTER FAILURE EVERY WAY.

SYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE

105

Calcutta
10 February 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I am enclosing copy of a letter which I have written to Rajendra Babu. As I told you on the 'phone, my intention was to try and form a very good Ministry irrespective of whether they belong to the Assembly or not. I realised that it might be difficult to find seats in the Assembly for too many outsiders, but I thought and still think that if I could show what a good Ministry can produce, I would perhaps be in a position to induce some of the members to give up their seats. In any case, the experiment has to be tried. I am tired of this fight for power politics which reduces politics to a game of shuttlecock. In the near

[1] Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh: Joined Congress, 1921; Chief Minister of West Bengal after independence; member, State Assembly, 1947-62; 1967-68; constructive worker of Gandhian programme

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future we may have to face the problem of dissolving the Assembly and get a new set of members.

You remember that I asked you to spare Mr. Charu Biswas from the High Court for a seat in the Ministry and you kindly allowed him to go on leave preparatory to retirement in order that he might join the Ministry. One difficulty has, however, arisen. The enquiry committee which was proposed by the previous Cabinet with Mr. Justice Chakravarti as chairman has not yet been formally appointed, as the Bill appointing the commission is before the Assembly. The previous Ministry wanted to have the commission by ordinance, but as the Assembly is sitting on the 10th it is difficult how to have an ordinance. Under the circumstances, we have to introduce a Bill. Mr. Justice Chakravarti, meanwhile, has refused to act as chairman. In view of this, I have asked Mr. Justice Biswas to take up this enquiry. I am writing to him expressing our thanks for his offer to join the Ministry, but as soon as the Bill is passed, he should be asked to take up this work which is a very important one, viz. enquiring into the condition of the Calcutta Corporation and suggesting remedies. It will certainly take about six months. I am sending you a copy of the Bill which is proposed to be introduced; it will give the terms of reference of the commission. We desire that the chairman should be a judge of the High Court. Justice Biswas was an active member of the Corporation for many years and one of its ablest critics. I understand that his term of service extends up to April 1948. Is it possible for him to get an extension for four months, till the end of September 1948, to finish the work as a judge? I hope it will be possible for you to spare Mr. Biswas for this purpose. I shall send you a note tomorrow about the result of the operations of the declaration of unlawful assembly with regard to particular organisations.

I am well. I hope you are better now.

Yours sincerely,
Bidhan Ch. Roy

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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ENCLOSURE

36 Wellington Street
Calcutta
10 February 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

I am enclosing herewith a list of persons selected by me for the Ministry and sworn in as such. I am sorry if I have failed to send you a formal report earlier, as I did not know the rules.

I have taken in 12 Ministers. . . .

You will notice that [I] myself have to take up four Departments, namely, General Administration and Development, Home, Local Self-Government, Public Health and Medical. Nalini Babu [N. R. Sarkar][1] has three Departments, namely, Finance, Commerce and Industry. Personally, I have always desired to keep only Development and Administration in my hands. But, I am afraid, this is not to be yet. The result is that I have to work almost the whole day for the different Departments, leaving little time for purposes of Development.

I understand from friends that those members of the Assembly who were not satisfied with the selection of the Ministry, are trying to stage a shuffling. In response to Gandhiji's call to form an "excellent Ministry" and in pursuance of the fact that the party elected me leader and that in doing so, the prominent men gave me in writing that while they desired that the Ministry should be formed from among the members, they yet left the number and the personnel to my unfettered discretion. Considering the needs of the province as a whole, I have chosen my Ministry. I am happy to say that the colleagues have put their heart into their work. I have taken three persons from outside, namely, Nalini Babu, Haren Babu and Sjt. Profulla Sen. Every one of them is exceptionally suited for the portfolio he is holding. I wish I could choose the whole lot of Ministers from within the Legislature. But I regret to say I could not manage it. I appealed to Sjt. Prafulla Ghosh to join and, at the desire of Maulana Azad and Sjt. Rajagopalachari, I was keen upon his taking up the Home Department. But he refused.

There is no question that if the recalcitrant element desire by a majority to recall this Ministry, I shall be happy to hand over to any one whom

1 Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1941-42; Minister of Finance, Commerce and Industries, West Bengal, after Independence; Mayor of Calcutta, 1934-35; member, Central Banking Enquiry Committee; member, Indian Industrial Mission to Britain and USA, 1945

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the majority want. I am afraid, however, and I want to make it clear to you, that after this, no new Ministry can be stable in Bengal and you will have to think of dissolution if you want to save Bengal from the fate which has overtaken France.

The present Ministers are taking the same salary as previously, namely, Rs. 1,250 a month inclusive of allowances. I am getting Rs. 250 more as allowance. The total cost on Ministers today is not more than the cost on Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries in the previous Cabinets. Therefore, the outside members have not been attracted by the salary but have joined at my request out of a spirit of service.

I have given in brief my viewpoint regarding the formation of Ministry by me in Bengal. I hope they will have your good wishes in their task.

Yours sincerely,
B. C. Roy

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

106

New Delhi
13 February 1948

My dear Bidhan,

Thank you for your letter dated 10 February 1948, regarding Mr. Justice Biswas. I am sorry it will not be possible without an amendment of the Act to grant him any extension. The age limit for the retirement of a judge of the High Court statutorily fixed at 60 and he cannot continue as a judge beyond that age. I notice, however, that the Bill provides that the chairman of the enquiry committee shall be a person who is or has been a judge of the High Court. It would, therefore, be possible for Mr. Justice Biswas to continue as chairman even after he retires as a judge.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. B. C. Roy
Premier, West Bengal
Calcutta

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Calcutta
23 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhaiji,

Please refer to the correspondence resting with your letter of 13 February 1948 regarding Mr. Justice Biswas. I quite appreciate that no person can continue to sit as a judge after attaining the age of 60 and must retire. Nor was it my intention to suggest that the Act should be amended in order to enable Mr. Justice Biswas to continue as a judge beyond the date of superannuation. What I had in mind was something similar to the provisions of paragraph 17(2) of the Government of India (High Court Judges) Order, 1937, under which the Secretary of State was empowered in special cases to direct that in calculating a judge's total service for the purpose of pension any period not exceeding three months might be added. This provision was evidently intended to give the retiring judge the benefit of a full year for the purpose of his pension although, according to the date of superannuation, his total service might be a few months short of the necessary number of completed years.

2. I am of course aware that the Order in Council referred to above is no longer applicable and that under Section 221 of the Government of India Act, as now adapted, the power to determine the rights of High Court judges in respect of leave, pension etc. is now vested in the Governor-General. What I wished to propose in the case of Mr. Justice Biswas was that as his date of superannuation would leave him four months short of the last completed year of service, he might, under a general or special order, be allowed to count for the purposes of pension additional service for the required period. A formal representation in this respect will presumably be made by Mr. Justice Biswas himself. I am writing this letter merely by way of advance intimation and a personal recommendation in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
B. C. Roy

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
22 April 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just had a telephone message from Bidhan Roy. He informs me that he has received a letter signed by about 23 members of the Bengal Assembly asking for a change in the Ministry for various reasons. Further that they want Surendra Mohan Ghosh[1] to be the Prime Minister. Bidhan has convened a meeting of the party for 9 May to consider this. He will be coming to Delhi for the Food Conference on the 28th of this month. I have suggested to him that two or three of the leading signatories might also be asked to come here to meet Rajendra Babu.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

109

Dehra Dun
26 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 22 April 1948 regarding the move in the Bengal Assembly for a change in the Ministry.

I myself feel that there is no escape from a fresh election. The present set-up of the Bengal Assembly is very weak and vacillating, and there is full scope for intrigues of every kind. When Bidhan was asked to take over Premiership, I told him myself that it would not be possible for him in the present circumstances to continue for more than a few months and that the same tactics would be repeated. Interference from outside, such as from the Congress President or from the Parliamentary Board, might remedy matters temporarily, but will not effect any lasting cure.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

[1] Veteran Congress leader of Bengal

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New Delhi
20 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

A question has arisen in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly where a by-election is going to take place for a Muslim seat. The executive of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee decided on 7 February 1948 that the Congress should not set up any candidate to contest the seat. As a matter of fact, there is one Congressman, namely, Mr. Mohammad Jan who has filed his nomination paper. It has been suggested that the Congress should adopt him as its candidate and the election should be contested. Mr. Mohammad Jan's nomination was filed before the Bengal Provincial Executive Committee's decision on 7 February. It was suggested that the decision of the Bengal Provincial Executive Committee should be revised and the Congress should contest the by-election. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was of opinion that this should be treated as a test case and the Congress should fight it out. The matter was reconsidered by the Executive of the BPCC on 17 February and the effective part of the resolution on that day runs as follows:

> "This meeting of the Executive Council of the BPCC reviewed the situation in the light of the above and authorises the President, Shri Surendra Mohan Ghosh, to make the final decision and recommend any name which he thinks fit to the Central Parliamentary Board."

Shri Surendra Mohan Ghosh has not made any definite recommendation and has referred the matter to the Central Parliamentary Board for final disposal. In the meantime a number of telegrams have been received by me saying that the Congress should not contest this by-election. Amongst the persons sending the telegram are Shri Mukleshwar Rehman, Maulana Ahmad Ali, editor of Navayug, the only Nationalist Muslim Bengali daily, and Habibur Rahman, Vice-President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. All the three gentlemen are nationalist Muslims. Another telegram has been received from Shri Rafiquddin, President, Park Circus Peace Committee.

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He is an important member of the constituency where the by-election has to take place. The point mentioned by most of these telegrams is that it would lead to communal bitterness and also that the chances of success of the Congress candidate are meagre. The voting is to take place on 1 March 1948 and we have only about eight days left. I had a talk with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad last night. He thinks that we must contest the election. I had a talk with Dr. P. C. Ghosh and Shri Surendra Mohan Ghosh also. They are of opinion that the chances are meagre specially because Mr. Jan is a non-Bengali Muslim and the voters are mostly Bengali Muslims and because there is so little time for propaganda.

I shall be obliged if you kindly let me have your opinion on the point whether we should set up the candidate or not. Kindly treat this matter as immediate.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Central Parliamentary Board
New Delhi

PS.

After the above was typed a telegram was received by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru from Mr. Suhrawardy[1] in which he most earnestly pleads not to set up a Congress candidate as it is likely to cause a clash between Hindu and Muslim volunteers and otherwise worsen the situation.

Rajendra Prasad

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New Delhi
20 February 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 February 1948, regarding by-election in Bengal. I am quite definite that we should not get mixed up in this matter. I see no particular advantage to be

[1] Chief Minister of Bengal at time of partition; later Prime Minister of Pakistan

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gained; in fact a great deal of harm may result. We should steer clear of this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

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Government House
Calcutta
29 April 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am enclosing a letter from the Director of Publicity, Government of West Bengal. Crime is pretty bad already. I feel that we shall be adding one more item to the romantic attraction of crime for semi-educated people if we allow such films with an aura of patriotic effort floating round it.

Also I believe that, incidentally, it would just serve to put money in the hands of people with no pretensions to patriotism, while a small percentage is distributed among those who have suffered imprisonment. I think the department responsible for censorship should discourage this and other similar productions. As for the local Congress executive, you know how weak they are against pressure, especially when the final 'yes' or 'no' does not lie with them. I have replied, as in the enclosed [papers], to the invitation that I should bless the film in the course of production.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Camp Mussoorie (UP)

ENCLOSURE

LETTER DATED 28 APRIL 1948 FROM SHRI P. S. MATHUR, DIRECTOR OF PUBLICITY, WEST BENGAL, TO THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR OF WEST BENGAL

Shri Loknath Bal, famous for the Chittagong Armoury Raid (1930), is producing a film on the subject. This has, I understand, the full support of the local Congress. The enclosed application addressed to you has been passed on to me by Shri Loknath Bal for transmission to you. This request I have been told is also supported by the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and some members of the Congress Executive.

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Mussoorie
4 May 1948

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your letter of 29 April 1948.

We at the Centre have no control over the production of films, nor over censorship. Censorship is for the present concentrated in the provinces, though we contemplate taking powers during the next session to have Central censorship as lack of uniformity is resulting in many anomalies. The only way this can be tackled, therefore, is to exercise pressure locally. A hint that even after the film is ready it might not be possible to permit its exhibition would serve the purpose.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Calcutta

114

Calcutta
20 June 1949

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am enclosing a letter which I have today addressed to Pandit Nehru. I have said what I felt and I stick to every word of what I have said. My only regret is that Pandit Nehru wants to explain away the fact that he himself has no resistance against communism, although he considers the communists in India to be undesirable fellows. This expression of opinion, you will perhaps admit, makes our position very difficult in this province. I wish he would realise what the position is and I wish that he should come himself and undertake the Government in this province for a little while, then he will know exactly where the trouble lies. A pious expression of opinion of this character makes the position of the West Bengal Government increasingly difficult. I wonder when he will realise this. On the other hand, every attempt we made to give relief to our people by increasing the

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quota of food for instance has been turned down by the Food Ministry. It is not possible for the provincial Government to carry on its work without complete realisation of the difficulties and co-operation from the different Ministries of the Government in the Centre.

Yours sincerely,
B. C. Roy

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

Calcutta
20 June 1949

My dear Jawahar,

This morning's paper has reported the speech that you delivered at the open session of the Provincial Political Conference in New Delhi. You are reported to have said two things:

(1) that "it showed that the people in that constituency were angry either against the provincial Congress in West Bengal or the provincial Government."

(2) that "the Ministers were in Government as representatives of the people and would resign when they had lost that representative character."

These two expressions of opinion on your part has set me thinking furiously. I for one do not admit that the defeat of the Congress at the South Calcutta by-election is an evidence of the "wrath and indignation" of the people as a whole with regard to the Government of West Bengal. As a matter of fact, this expression of opinion is very similar to what the followers of Shri Surendra Mohan Ghose expressed to Kala Venkata Rao[1] and to which Kala Vankata, being present throughout the election campaign, retorted that it was all nonsense to speak about the unpopularity of the West Bengal Government being responsible for the failure of the election. In fact, the various propaganda that were carried on during the election campaign by the subversive and vociferous elements were propaganda more against the Central Government and its activities rather than against the West Bengal Government. However

[1] Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee; Minister in Ramaswami Reddiar Cabinet; General Secretary, AICC

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that be, I feel that it is necessary for me to put before you the reaction your speech has on my mind.

Yours sincerely,
B. C. Roy

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

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EXTRACTS

237 Lower Circular Road
Calcutta
1 July 1949

My dear Sardarji,

It is with extreme reluctance that I am writing to bother you when you are enjoying your well-earned rest at Dehra Dun. I hope that the change has done you good and you will return to Delhi refreshed and restored to health.

The immediate occasion for disturbing you is to inform you about certain developments here. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has written to me and subsequently sent me a telegram to say that he will be paying a visit to Calcutta on 13 and 14 July to study things for himself and offer us help and guidance, if necessary. His visit at this trying time is indeed most welcome and I have written him back accordingly. He has indicated certain line of arrangement during his stay here which we are following scrupulously and everything is being done according to his desire. He has also given to me certain points which he proposes to discuss with the Government of West Bengal. We are preparing a detailed memorandum on those points, a copy of which I shall also be sending to you. I propose to place before him a severely realistic picture of our strength and weakness, success and failings, our difficulties and limitations as also our own suggestion for enabling him to have a proper appreciation of the situation.

Dr. Roy's absence at the moment is surely a handicap, because he used to deal with the Police Department wholly and with the Civil Supplies largely.

The situation out here is far from reassuring. All the anti-Congress groups are now practically combined under the virtual

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leadership of the Communist Party. Their latest strategy is to create day-to-day trouble and to keep the tempo of disaffection high. So far, we have been able to manage the situation with our own resources. But from information at our disposal, it appears that they are likely to intensify their activities in July, and what we apprehend is that they will create disturbance simultaneously at different parts of the province. Therefore, there is every likelihood that the trouble will soon spread out. What is causing me worry is that our police force is not so strong—both quantitatively and qualitatively—that we may very easily meet the situation adequately.

Our greatest weakness is, however, the local Congress organisation. I imagine Panditji might also like to have a correct picture of the position vis-a-vis the WBPCC. My difficulty is that for the last 6 or 7 years I have been rather out of touch with the party organisation. This is, of course, a source of advantage as well as disadvantage to me; nevertheless, my part of the task, as I view it, is to place before him the real position. I shall of course be keeping you posted with what transpires here. I learn from a private source that you are returning to Delhi on 7 July. If after your return, there be any urgent development, I shall surely contact you either by phone or by any other means of communication.

With kind respects and regards,

Yours very sincerely,
Nalini R. Sarkar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Dehra Dun
5 July 1949

My dear Nalini,

Thank you for your letter of 1 July 1949.

I fully realise your difficulty and your predicament in the absence of Bidhan, but you should not be nervous about it. The best thing is to present to Jawaharlal facts as they are and let him have a realistic appreciation of the position. So long as you stick to facts and truth, there is no room either for nervousness or fear.

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I am fully cognisant of the various currents and cross-currents in West Bengal politics. In fact, the result of the by-election did not come as any surprise to me. In some respects, I regret that the names of Jawaharlal and myself were unnecessarily dragged into it. We thought, however, that we should not let down the local Congress, lest they should ascribe their defeat to any act of omission on our part. However, it seems that even the result of this by-election has been lost on the local Congress, and it has not provided the stimulus and the urge for unity and closing up of ranks, which it should. It is no use blaming one party or another. Everybody in West Bengal is to blame. There can be no doubt that the fair name of the Congress has been besmirched, and the organisation, of which we are all proud and which we nursed and nourished by our own sacrifices, has been let down. That should be a matter of shame to everybody in West Bengal, whether they are indigenous or whether they have migrated from East Bengal. I have no doubt in my own mind that something drastic will have to be done, and it is quite possible that we may have to apply the proverbial surgeon's knife. But this will have to be done, if at all it is to be effective, irrespective of personalities and prompted by the sole desire to restore the organisation to the position and prestige to which it is entitled.

As regards the law and order problem, Bapat has just returned, and I am seeing him tomorrow. I shall have a talk with Jawaharlal after he returns from Leh and before he goes to Calcutta, if he can find time to come here.

I shall consider the question of a suitable police officer for West Bengal. The Centre has none to lend; it itself borrows from the provinces. I shall see if we can let you have one from any other province.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri N. R. Sarkar
Minister, Government of West Bengal
Calcutta

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Calcutta
12 August 1949

My dear Sardarji,

As I was going to write to you, I was confounded by the Press report that you were not doing well and proceeding to Bombay for treatment. I was very much worried for this, and it is a great relief to know now that there is nothing serious about it and preliminary examinations have revealed nothing disconcerting. I hope and pray that the invigorating sea breeze of Bombay will do you good and you will be your normal self again.

Nothing of importance or urgency has occurred since I saw you last. Everything seems to be quiet. The anti-Government forces, viz., the various Leftist splinter groups are preparing for the coming general elections which is naturally the main issue for them at the moment. They are preparing for a measure of strength with the Congress and a showdown. Since they think that it will not be possible to fight the Congress in the election with their present respective party strength, a patched-up unity, not on a definite political or economic programme but on the common opposition to the Congress, is their only hope. Recently Shri Jai Prakash Narain came here and met Sarat Babu[1] with a view to exploring the possibilities of left consolidation. The talks at first centred round a possible merger of the so-called leftist groups so that a common platform against the Congress could be created. But all hopes of a merger have fizzled out and the negotiations at the end of the talks related only to the possibility of forming a common front against the Congress for the coming election. Shri Narain will come again on the 17th to resume the discussion. Regarding merger, the Socialist Party is of the opinion that since theirs is the bigger group Sarat Babu may join them if he likes to. The Socialist Party is not a strong organisation in Bengal and, so far as I can see, they have not been able to make much headway uptil now, even in the present political situation when the Congress is somewhat unpopular with a section of the people. I understand that there has been a new

1 Sarat Chandra Bose: leading Congressman of Bengal; elder brother of Subhas Chandra Bose; member, Interim Government headed by Nehru

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orientation in the inner policy of the Socialist Party. They are not going to put emphasis on labour and kisans just at the present moment as they do not expect much response in the face of the communists; so they have decided to concentrate on the middle-class and that is why Jai Prakash has contacted and met lawyers, barristers, professors, students and journalists etc., with a view to enlisting their support. You will note with interest that Shri Jai Prakash was entertained in cocktail parties separately by Calcutta barristers, one in a private party by Shri A. K. Basu of the criminal side of the Bar, and the other by some other barristers at the Calcutta Club where he addressed a number of them. Such parties are rather a departure from the lofty traditions of the Calcutta Bar, and this only indicates the lowering standard of the Bar in Calcutta. Those who attended these parties are not of the front rank and I do not think they can very much help Shri Jai Prakash Narain or his leftist groups.

The difficulties of the Congress circles here are the same as before. There seems to be very little hope of a rapprochement between the contending groups. You will be surprised to learn that none from inside the Congress has yet raised a finger to oppose what Sarat Babu has been saying or doing or what Shri Jai Prakash has said up till now. There is far less any attempt on their part to contact the people and convince them about the dangers and designs of the Leftist manoeuvres. On the other hand, a whispering campaign is going on at the initiative of Dr. P. C. Ghosh's group that the Working Committee will ask Dr. B. C. Roy to quit as soon as he comes back and request Dr. Ghosh to take over charge. Some of the Ministers, who belong to the Congress organisation and have worked actively for it in the past, are however now out in the districts and addressing the public to counter the activities of the anti-Congress groups. As I had already told you in Delhi, the responsibility for keeping troubles alive inside Congress ranks is entirely that of two or three persons of the Assembly Party. This can be confirmed by anybody who knows the inner groupings and internal working of the present WBPCC. These persons are leaving no stone unturned to discredit the present Ministry even if it means discrediting the Congress. Their main intention is to bring in Prafulla Babu in place of Dr. Roy, because unless that can be done, they themselves cannot come into the Ministry, for, without the back door, they have no chance by the open door as they cannot claim any popularity with the public because of their past conduct and activities, to put the position very mildly.

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Dr. Roy telephoned to me day before yesterday from London where he will be staying till 20 August for getting medical advice. After that he will proceed to Vienna and thence to Paris, and in both these places he has made prior arrangements for consulting specialists which, he says, he cannot cancel now. He will, however, take off from Paris on 1 September for India. If you are in Bombay by the time he reaches there, I have asked him to meet you, which, I am sure, he will surely do. He will come to Calcutta and stay here for a couple of days before proceeding to Delhi. I have pointed out to him the urgency of his early return but in view of the difficulties stated above, he cannot start earlier than 1 September.

We are taking preliminary steps with regard to the general elections on the lines of the recommendations of the Working Committee and have issued orders stopping the by-elections. The electoral rolls are also being revised. The refugees have given rise to some difficulty, as all copies of electoral rolls for the Pakistan districts were taken away by them at the time of partition. We are, however, trying to get a copy from the Pakistan Government.

I am very anxious for your health and I hope we shall all be reassured to hear soon that you are fully restored to health.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Nalini R. Sarkar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Bombay
22 August 1949

My dear Nalini Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 12 August 1949. Actually, I was thinking of writing to you when your letter came.

It seems to me that things will not move at your end until Bidhan returns. It is valuable time lost, but it seems we cannot help it.

I am sorry to find that things in Bengal, so far as the organisational side is concerned, do not seem to be moving in the desired direction. The responsibility now rests fully and squarely with the Congress leaders of West Bengal. If they cannot play the game, nobody can make them do so. You can take the

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horse to the water, but cannot make it drink. Political rivalries still seem to be thriving. Everybody seems to be mindful of all other interests except that of West Bengal.

I am glad that you are preparing for the election. I hope it will be possible to adhere to the time-table we chalked out.

I was rather surprised to read in the papers the other day that a coroner and jury had held the police firing on women processionists unnecessary and excessive. I cannot understand how the coroner came to give his verdict so late, nor can I appreciate the reasons for the verdict. You remember at the time it was suggested that there might be a judicial enquiry into the firing. It was then declined. Now the position is very awkward. Please let me know what you propose to do in the circumstances.

I am now feeling much better and am looking forward to my return to Delhi after a fortnight or so.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar
Calcutta

119

6 Suren Tagore Road
Ballygunge
Calcutta
7 August 1948

My dear Sardar,

I am sorry I could not meet you after I had talks with Jawaharlalji and Rajaji and could not communicate to you the decision I arrived at. Jugal Kishoreji knows everything and I hope he has told you everything.

As regards the Bengal-Bihar boundary controversy, you know that Panditji speaks in one strain and Dr. Syama Prasad in [another]. I think in matters involving policy, only the Prime Minister on behalf of the Cabinet should speak. If other Ministers begin to speak in another strain, it creates confusion. Rajen Babu in his letter to a Calcutta lawyer has suggested plebiscite. While in Delhi, I told him that it would be entirely wrong. Whatever may be the result of plebiscite, there will be such bitterness that after that no Bengali can remain in Bihar nor a Bihari

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can remain in Bengal. Even during the plebiscite, there may be breaking of heads. So I suggested to Rajen Babu that the matter should be referred to one or more High Court judges, not belonging either to Bihar or to Bengal and their decision should be final. In the meantime, no Congressman either of Bihar or of Bengal should be allowed to carry on any propaganda either in the Press or in the platform. They should go with facts and figures to the commission. I have also written to Rajen Babu and have requested him to take up the matter in the next meeting of the Working Committee, because the more we delay the more the situation will deteriorate.

The Hindu code is being considered by the Assembly Party. In my opinion, it is a progressive law. It should be taken up without delay. Certain members of the Hindu Mahasabha like Shri Debendranath Mukherjee are very anxious about the fate of the Congress at the next election if we pass this code. But as it appears from the trend of the Hindu Mahasabha, again they will not hesitate to sieze any opportunity to fight the Congress, if possible, at the time of the next election. Dr. Syama Prasad is more intelligent than the rest and, in fact, he is the best of the lot. But he is a weak man. He cannot carry his followers sometimes and is himself led by them. I do feel that if this code is passed, it will be good.

While in Delhi, you told me that even if you talk a little more you feel exhausted. I think, considering your age, you should be extra careful. I know you are; but still I think my cautioning is not superfluous.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Prafulla

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

120

New Delhi
7 September 1948

My dear Bidhan,

Thank you for your letter of 4 September 1948.

I am afraid it will not be possible for us to have any Central ordinance like the Defence of India Act. That Act was passed

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when the Government of India had, under a proclamation of emergency, powers to legislate for the provinces as well. That power is no longer with the Centre. The subject of law and order being provincial, only a provincial ordinance or act can mend matters. I would suggest that you amend your own act in such a manner as you may deem expedient and necessary. This suggestion, I believe, has already been made to your Government officially by the Home Ministry.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. B. C. Roy
Calcutta

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Government House
Barrackpore
12 November 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I am so grateful to you for the kind enquiries you made during my illness. Doctors advised an immediate operation and I bowed to their advice. I have made good recovery and hope to be able to resume my normal activities within a few days.

I was deeply gratified to know that by God's grace you are now in the best of health. You have visited Bombay, Nagpur and Lucknow. I do hope that you will not forget Calcutta and will pay us a visit also in the near future.

I was so glad that you spoke so frankly at Nagpur about the exodus from East [Bengal] into West Bengal. Your observation that unless it was made possible for Hindus to continue to live in East Bengal with dignity and self-respect, the question of territorial adjustment would have to be considered, has—as was to be expected—led to bitter comments from the Premier of East Bengal. This matter of refugees continues to be practically the only topic of discussion here. Newspapers are full with statements and counter-statements. So long as the Muslim leaders in Pakistan continue to declare that Pakistan is an Islamic State very few Hindus, I apprehend, would care to call themselves Pakistani nationals. This is recognized in East Bengal also because one of the Ministers lately is reported to have said that theirs is not an Islamic State: it is a Secular State in which the Islamic

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concepts of liberty and equality will be fully applicable. The division of the Punjab and Bengal was wholly unnatural and artificial. The Punjab problem has solved itself by the migration of populations on both sides. The Bengal problem remains. A wholesale migration is inconceivable and the whole concept of Eastern Bengal being a part of Pakistan is unnatural. One of the Ministers in Eastern Bengal, Mr. Bahar, said a few days ago that the people of East and West Bengal, in spite of political divisions, were one people bound to each other by the strongest ties of a common language and common traditions etc. He was merely stating what is an obvious truth, and I can only hope that Muslims in East Bengal will see the absurdity of the present arrangements and take action accordingly.

Your remarks at Nagpur against provincialism have been widely welcomed here. In passing, you refer to the treatment of Sikh drivers in Calcutta and I sometimes hear complaints of exhibitions of provincial feeling in Calcutta. There can be no doubt that provincial jealousies and exhibitions of a narrow provincial spirit are to be strongly deprecated. But what we denounce as provincialism really arises sometimes out of economic conditions and administrative restrictions throughout India. For instance, in the UP and in Orissa there is a rule that all applicants for Government posts should be persons native and domiciled in the province. I imagine that the same rule exists in other provinces. In a sense that is an exhibition of provincialism. In Bengal, Bengalis are faced—as I see it—with peculiar difficulties requiring sympathetic consideration. In days gone by they had taken to literary pursuits and Government services and were to be found spread over all over Northern India, from Calcutta to Peshawar, and Orissa and Bihar and Assam were then parts of Bengal itself. When I was a student in Lahore in 1900-05, the only Indian Judge of the Lahore Chief Court was a Bengali, Pratul Chandra Chatterjee, and more than half of the practising lawyers were Bengalis. Now, owing to a variety of reasons, Bengalis have no scope elsewhere. You know, in Assam and Bihar and Orissa, where there is a large Bengali element in the local populations, there is a great anti-Bengali feeling. It is unnecessary to go into the causes of it but it does exist. The result is that outside the Central Government the Bengalis have to fall back on their own province to sustain them. They want jobs not only in Government departments but also opportunities for livelihood in the industrial field. Government has ceased to be a mere police State: it exercises control in a large measure in the economic

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sphere—rationing, civil supplies, licences, ration shops and nationalized transport etc.—and the local people expect that their claims would be given priority by Government.

I have ventured to say all this because I feel that the evil of provincialism which is so rampant has to be dealt with on an all-India basis and all provincial Governments should be asked to revise their rules and regulations in so far as they may savour of inter-provincial restrictions. Bengalis in West Bengal, as it is, are too many for the area of West Bengal. Their numbers are added by the influx of refugees from East Bengal and the economic distress among them in these difficult times is very great.

I wonder when I shall have the privilege of meeting you. I read in the newspapers that Governors are going to be invited to the Congress session at Jaipur. I do not know whether that report is correct.

With kindest regards and with great respect,

I am,
Yours very sincerely,
K. N. Katju[1]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

122

New Delhi
16 November 1948

My dear Dr. Katju,

Thank you for your letter of 12 November 1948.

I am so glad to know that you have made good recovery and that you hope to resume your normal activities within a few days.

I am glad you agree with me about East Bengal and the evil of provincialism. Both are difficult problems and it is very likely that the future of this country will depend on our finding a speedy solution of these problems.

We are sure the Congress President will invite you and other Congress Governors to the Jaipur session.

Yours very sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Dr. K. N. Katju
Barrackpore

[1] Law, Development and Industries Minister in first Congress Ministry in UP, 1937 and later in 1946; Governor of Orissa, 1947; later Minister, Home & Defence Minister in Nehru Cabinet; retired as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh

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4 King Edward Road
New Delhi
15 November 1948

My dear Sardarji,

The enclosed telegram I have just received from Dr. Roy. I believe you must have also got a similar telegram.

The Working Committee, I find, considered the question of creating a separate Congress province comprising certain Bengali-speaking areas now in Assam and certain other adjoining areas outside Assam. I find a general decision has been taken that the Congress province should, as far as possible, correspond to the administrative province as constituted under the existing Act. I feel that there is no case for placing Cooch Behar and Tripura under the Assam Congress Committee. At present they are attached to the West Bengal Congress. As you are aware, these are hundred per cent Bengali-speaking areas, and culturally, politically and administratively they had all along been associated with Bengal. In fact there is no reason why they should not be placed under the supervision of the West Bengal Governor. It has been suggested that as these areas are not contiguous to West Bengal, they should be placed under the Assam Congress. This is not so with regard to Cooch Behar which adjoins Jalpaiguri district. If contiguity is insisted upon as a condition precedent, both Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling will disappear from the jurisdiction of West Bengal. The boundaries were fixed most arbitrarily by Radcliffe who deliberately denied the Indian Union territories which should have formed part of West Bengal. This should not be treated as a consideration for depriving West Bengal of further Bengali-speaking territories which, previous to 15 August 1947, were closely linked up with undivided Bengal.

I am not raising any question relating to provincial bias or prejudice. It is, however, well known that the Bengalis have been receiving very hard treatment in the hands of Assam. You could not even do justice to the people of Sylhet which formed part of Assam and who opted for India. Old Government servants belonging to Assam Circle have been deprived of their rights and promises held out by the Government of India have

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been openly violated. We should not make things more difficult in future by adding to Assam large Bengali-speaking areas, like Tripura and Cooch Behar which are now under the jurisdiction of Bengal Congress.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

TELEGRAM

Calcutta
14 November 1948

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
New Delhi

TODAY'S PRESS REPORT MENTIONS THAT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE CONSIDERED QUESTION OF JURISDICTION OF BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE OVER CERTAIN AREAS IN EAST AND NORTH BENGAL. WEST BENGAL GOVERNMENT IS VITALLY INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING CONNECTION WITH TRIPURA AND COOCH BEHAR WHICH ARE PREEMINENTLY BENGALI-SPEAKING AND WHOSE COURT LANGUAGE IS BENGALI. BEFORE ARRIVING AT A FINAL DECISION REGARDING THESE AREAS KINDLY ALLOW THIS GOVERNMENT OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS OUR VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT.

BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY

124

New Delhi
15 November 1948

My dear Syama Prasad,

Thank you for your letter of 15 November 1948.

The Working Committee has already considered the problem of Cooch Behar, Tripura and Cachar in the light of all relevant factors. I think that that decision does adequate justice to the claims of West Bengal and fully safeguards the legitimate claims of the Bengali-speaking population in that area.

I do not see how possibly we can put either Cooch Behar or Tripura under West Bengal. In the event of an emergency—and I am sure you will agree that in this matter we must be guided by a sense of emergency in present circumstances—it is

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only Assam which can provide assistance to these areas. It is particularly for this reason that we have had to place these areas under the Governor of Assam and not under the Provincial Government. This we had given to the Governor of Assam more or less in his representative capacity. I do not see any reason why West Bengal should have any grievance in this matter.

I am afraid you are not quite correct in regard to Government servants from Sylhet who opted for India. We made enquiries of the Assam Government some time ago, and learnt that almost all of them had now been provided for.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Minister for Industry & Supply
Government of India
New Delhi

125

Calcutta
2 December 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

As President of the National Council of Education, Bengal, may I personally request you to grace the occasion with your presence?

Yours sincerely,
B. C. Roy

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

126

New Delhi
13 December 1948

My dear Dr. B. C. Roy,

Please refer to your letter of 2 December 1948. I am sending herewith a message of good wishes for the National Council of Education, Bengal.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. B. C. Roy
Calcutta

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ENCLOSURE

The National Council of Education was founded at a time when Indian nationalism faced a very serious challenge from the entrenched foreign administration. That challenge was no doubt accepted, but it was constructive institutions like the National Council which enabled the nation to face that challenge with courage and determination. Apart from this, the institutions which were founded under the aegis of this Council have turned out scientific talent of which the country was in sore need. India still lacks scientific manpower which is essential if national prosperity is to be built on sound foundations and if its future in the comity of nations is to be assured. I wish and pray that the National Council of Education will continue to serve the national cause with renewed vigour, determination and confidence.

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TELEGRAM

Calcutta
18 December 1948

Sardar Patel
Gandhinagar

I FIND IN TODAY'S HINDUSTAN STANDARD AMRITBAZAR AND OTHER PAPERS THAT ACCORDING TO UNITED PRESS YOU HAVE SAID QUOTE BENGALIS WERE NOT STRONG THEY ONLY KNEW HOW TO WEEP UNQUOTE THIS HAS SHOCKED US BEYOND MEASURE. PLEASE INFORM IF YOU HAVE BEEN CORRECTLY REPORTED.

SURESH MAJUMDAR
HINDUSTAN STANDARD

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
20 December 1948

Suresh Majumdar
Hindustan Standard
Calcutta

YOUR TELEGRAM OF EIGHTEENTH. SORRY MY SPEECH WHICH WAS SO MUCH APPRECIATED BY BENGAL DELEGATES HAS UPSET YOU PERHAPS OWING INCORRECT REPORTING. SPEECH REFERRED NOT TO BENGALIS IN GENERAL BUT TO THOSE POOR EMACIATED LEADERLESS AND OPPRESSED EAST BENGAL HINDUS WHO WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO RESIST OR LEAVE THEIR PLACE. THEY CANNOT BE COMPARED TO STURDY STOUT PUNJABIS WHO COULD FIGHT OR RETALIATE. POOR PEOPLE CAN ONLY WEEP. I HOPE THIS WILL RELIEVE YOUR DISTRESS.

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

129

Governor's Camp
Bihar
17 January 1948

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

I understand that you will be coming down to Patna on the 26th of this month to inaugurate the Broadcasting Station of All India Radio at Patna. I am afraid this, like many other programmes, will be dependent on the successful close of Mahatma-ji's fast. Assuming that you are coming as programmed, I shall be very glad if you will give me the pleasure of your company at dinner with me on the 26th. Your host, the Honourable the Premier, will, of course, be there too and has gladly agreed to my inviting you.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. S. Aney

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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TELEGRAM

Ahmedabad
21 January 1948

His Excellency Governor
Governor's Camp
Bihar

MANY THANKS YOUR VERY KIND INVITATION TO DINNER ON TWENTY-SIXTH. WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO COME.

VALLABHBHAI

131

TELEGRAM

Ahmedabad
22 January 1948

Honourable Srikrishna Sinha[1]
Prime Minister
Patna

WILL BE REACHING PATNA ABOUT TEN ON TWENTYSIXTH WILL TELEGRAPH DEFINITE TIME ON REACHING DELHI. PARTY WILL CONSIST OF MYSELF MANIBEHN SHANKAR AND PROBABLY HIS NIECE. WOULD PREFER TO BE ACCOMMODATED AT ONE PLACE. IF NOT POSSIBLE SHANKAR HAS ALREADY RECEIVED INVITATION FROM PILLAI YOUR CHIEF SECRETARY AND HE WILL GO THERE.

VALLABHBHAI

[1] Congress leader who was Premier of Bihar, 1937-39, and Chief Minister for a decade after independence

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132

New Delhi
28 January 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

I am returning herewith the papers which you gave me before I left for Bihar.

2. As regards taking the State of the Raja of Ramgarh under Court of Wards, Krishna Ballabh Sahay[1] told me that there was no truth in it and that they were not thinking of doing so. Actually he said that there was no use when the abolition of zamindari was almost round the corner.

3. As regards the District Board affair at Ramgarh, I had a talk with all of them who were concerned, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Local Self-Government and Krishna Ballabh Sahay. They have taken more than six months to notify the result of the elections and I am doubtful whether, even now, they will proceed with this business expeditiously. They lay the entire blame on the resolution of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, according to which they have to consult the leader of the majority party in the Board so as to ensure that the nominations do not in any way nullify the result of the elections. The party on behalf of the Raja of Ramgarh did not send its list of names until 25 December 1947. They had thereafter to consult the District Magistrate about the individual claims. They also said that the result of the three special mining constituencies was not yet known. Regarding the charge of partisanship, the Minister for Local Self-Government said that there was another area in Manbhum district the result of which was similarly held up for almost the same reasons, although the majority of the Board was in favour of the Congress. While these may prop up a case, it seems to me quite obvious that there has been unconscionable delay. The District Magistrate sent his nominations in the last week of August. It should not have taken the Ministry more than a fortnight or three weeks to secure from the majority party its list

[1] Parliamentary Secretary, Bihar Cabinet, 1937; Minister for Land Revenue, Bihar, 1946-57; Minister for Co-operation & Planning, Bihar, 1962-63; Chief Minister of Bihar, 1963-67

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of nominations. If they failed to submit it, within the time allowed, he could have proceeded on his own without incurring any charges of partisanship etc. I have given them a bit of my mind on this subject as well, but I am not quite sure whether they will move rapidly even now.

4. As regards the Ministry as a whole and the local Congress, I am afraid I have returned full of misgivings and disappointment. The Ministry and the Provincial Congress are at loggerheads and the Ministry itself is not united. It was a most sickening thing to enter into these unseemly bickerings and I thought it best to draw public attention in a forthright speech. It also appears that Socialists are fishing in troubled waters and that unless things are dealt with resolutely and discipline is restored with the least possible delay, it might be too late to resuscitate the Congress Organisation in this province.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President
Indian National Congress
New Delhi

133

Camp Bajajwadi
Wardha
28 March 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am herewith forwarding you a copy of the letter which I have addressed to Maulana Sahib in connection with the acquisition of zamindaris, which is now pending in Bihar Assembly. I would request you to read it as it contains certain important points in this connection.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

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ENCLOSURE

Camp Bajajwadi
Wardha
27 March 1948

My dear Maulana Sahib,

After the telephone talk I had with you the other day, I had requested Shri Krishna Ballabh Babu to come and see me here in connection with the Zamindari Acquisition Bill in Bihar and he came here to see me today. The present position is this. The Bill which was introduced in the Assembly some months ago was referred to the Select Committee and the Select Committee made its report some time ago. The report of the Select Committee was presented to the Assembly on 28 February. The third reading of the Bill will begin on 30 March and the clauses of the Bill will be considered one after another. The Assembly will, it is expected, pass the Bill in a few days after the 30th. The question is whether, at this stage, the Ministry can postpone consideration of the Bill. There is a strong feeling amongst the members, as also in the public at large, that further progress of the Bill should not be delayed. The Central Parliamentary Board had on a previous occasion convened a meeting of the Revenue Ministers from the various provinces, and although I had not then taken over charge as the President, I presided over the conference . . . which you were also good enough to attend for some time. The decision of the conference was that the Bill should be proceeded with and it was after the conference that the Select Committee in Bihar sat and with certain amendments prepared its report. So much about the position.

As regards the merits of the Bill, I suppose everybody now accepts the position that the zamindaris should be abolished and even the zamindars, more or less, have reconciled themselves to it. The only question is about the compensation and the method of paying it. The Bihar Bill has made provision for payment of compensation. The total amount, it is calculated, will come to something like Rs. 130 crores, maybe even Rs. 140 crores. That has to be paid partly in cash and partly in bonds which will be negotiable and bear interest at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum. As far as I can judge, the Bihar Government has got no cash nor, I am afraid, will it be able to get any cash assistance from the Government of India unless you all could persuade the Finance Minister. On the face of it, it is rather hard on the bigger zamindars that they should get three times their net income as compensation. The net income is arrived at by making certain reductions on account of revenue and collection

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charges etc. etc. which comes nearly to about 50 per cent of their gross revenue so that the compensation in their case will come only to 1½ times their present gross collections. The Select Committee made certain changes which favoured the smaller landlords whose scale of compensations has been increased and who have got also large concession by being allowed to split up their income as members of a joint family and thus bring the income of each member of the family within the scale which pays a higher rate of compensation. This has, on the one hand, added considerably to the Government's liability and added the same amount to the compensation which will be payable to the smaller zamindars. Thus, according to the previous calculation, when the rate payable was lower, in case of the smaller zamindars and the splitting of their incomes was not allowed, the total compensation payable was calculated to be something like Rs. 63 or Rs. 64 crores. As a result of this Select Committee's amendment, the compensation payable has become more than double and is now calculated to be something between Rs. 130 and Rs. 140 crores. All this increase will go to zamindars, whose income is below Rs. 4 lakhs, and they will also get something additional from what is taken away from those whose income is more than Rs. 4 lakhs, because the minimum payable before was five times the net revenue on incomes of over Rs. 50,000. Now it has been reduced to 3 times on incomes of over Rs. 4 lakhs, while the compensation payable on incomes between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 4 lakhs varies between 7 times and 3 times. The net result of the Select Committee's report has been that the smaller landlords have good reason to be satisfied, but the bigger landlords have no reason to become more dissatisfied than they were before. But, the number of zamindars who will come in the category of zamindars having more than Rs. 4 lakhs on which only 3 times will be paid as compensation will be very small. They will practically be only the six States of Dharbhanga, Bettiah, Dumraon, Hathua, Ramgarh and Ratu which would be hit. According to the Bill, as reported by the Select Committee, the total compensation payable to these six States will come to something like Rs. 2 crores and Rs. 31 lakhs roughly.

I think the Maharaja of Dharbhanga is still there. If you could have a talk with him in the presence of the Revenue Minister, perhaps some way could be found without postponing the Bill to give these six landlords some satisfaction. So far as I can judge, if they are thinking of having the Bill altogether dropped, that will not be possible either for the Ministry or for any of us to do. So the only relief that they can get can be about the compensation. The Bill has tried to give higher compensation to the smaller people and the amount will be distributed amongst a large number of smaller zamindars.

At one stage, the Select Committee had resolved to fix a ceiling and not to allow more than Rs. 25 lakhs as compensation to any one whatever his income from his zamindari might be. When Sardar went to Patna, he object-

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ed to the ceiling put and so that ceiling has been dropped. If that had remained, the Maharaja of Dharbhanga, whose net income came to say Rs. 25 or Rs. 30 lakhs a year could not have got more than Rs. 25 lakhs as compensation. The Bill, as it now stands, will give Rs. 75 lakhs or Rs. 90 lakhs according as his net income is found to be Rs. 25 or Rs. 30 lakhs. Similarly, the other five zamindars will also get a larger amount than what they would have got if the ceiling of Rs. 25 lakhs had been maintained. I am mentioning all these points for your consideration, so that in the course of conversation, you may be able to point out what has been done so far.

I received a telegram from the Maharaja of Dharbhanga two or three days ago in which he complained that another Bill was going to be introduced raising the rate of agricultural income tax. The Bill has not yet been introduced, but it has been published and is likely to be introduced in April. The effect of this Bill is likely to be to raise the Government's revenue from the agricultural income tax from Rs. 30 lakhs to nearabout Rs. 50 lakhs, that is to say, an additional Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 lakhs. You might talk about this matter also with Krishna Ballabh Babu.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
New Delhi

134

31 March 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 28 March 1948 regarding abolition of zamindari in Bihar.

2. Krishna Ballabh Sahay was here. He had a talk both with Maulana Sahib and Panditji. He saw me also, so did Maulana Sahib, but in my present state of health I am afraid I could hardly make any contribution to the discussion. If all of you feel that it would be best and in the interest of Bihar to continue the Bill, the Bihar Government can do so.

3. I hope you are feeling better. I am still confined to bed though doctors have permitted my bed to be taken outside in the lawn. I hope, if all goes well, I will be able to move about at least in the house, after about a fortnight.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Bajajwadi
Wardha

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Government House
Patna
28 April 1948

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

I was relieved to hear from Rajendra Babu that you are somewhat better. I do hope you will take adequate rest and be restored to complete health very soon. I trust it would not be disturbing you too much to forward to you a letter which I have addressed to the Hon'ble Premier of Bihar as it might be of some interest to you. But if at all you are not well enough, kindly do not take any action as I have sent a copy already both to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and to Rajendra Babu.

With very best regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. S. Aney

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

Governor's Camp
Bihar
23 April 1948

My dear Dr. S. K. Sinha,

During the time of his visit Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Deputy Prime Minister, had referred to the Abolition of Zamindari Bill in the public speech delivered by him at the Maidan, severely criticising the provisions therein relating to the payment of compensation, and characterised the measure as confiscatory or expropriatory.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who was Minister for Food till very recently and who is at present the President of the Congress and also of the Constituent Assembly, had, in his conversations with me, indicated that the Government of India will not be inclined to give any financial assistance to the Government of Bihar to meet their obligations. He does not consider the clauses re-

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lating to compensation as equitable and fair in so far as they apply to big landlords at any rate.

Another point which Dr. Rajendra Prasad stressed was, in my opinion, of great importance from the economic point of view. He says that under the existing system of landed aristocracy each zamindar supports a number of persons dependent on him. With the abolition of zamindari all these dependents will be entirely resourceless, and there will be so many persons thrown out, and for whom the State will have to make some provision, and the problem will be comparable to that of the refugees.

The Government of Bihar has tacitly accepted the principle of payment of equitable compensation. I confess that I am not personally satisfied with the equity of the provisions relating to the compensation embodied in the Bill. But that is, I concede, a matter for the Legislature to decide. But once the principles are passed, there can be no going back over the promises which they hold out to the landlords whose lands are being acquired.

The clause in the Bill which vests all the zamindari lands automatically at the end of six months, irrespective of the question of compensation for the same being settled and paid, is not in conformity with the principle laid down in the Congress Manifesto, though it may not be a complete negation of it. If this clause be made less rigid and a new clause, empowering the Provincial Government to declare the land to vest in it at such date as it may deem necessary, be introduced, the situation will, to some extent, improve.

I earnestly wish that in carrying out this great reform you should do everything to win the support of the Union Government. With that support the Government will be able to administer the law smoothly and successfully.

I am of opinion that a little delay in passing the Bill will not be as detrimental as its hasty passage without any adequate solution for the difficulties that can be foreseen.

With my best regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. S. Aney

The Hon'ble Dr. S. K. Sinha
Premier, Bihar
Patna

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Mussoorie
2 May 1948

My dear Bapuji,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 April 1948.

I have read with interest your letter to Sri Babu. The Working Committee is seized of this matter. Perhaps, Rajen Babu, who is coming here tomorrow, may mention it to me. I am afraid it is difficult for me to do anything from here.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Mr. M. S. Aney
Governor of Bihar
Patna

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CHAPTER V

CONGRESS AFFAIRS IN BOMBAY

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New Delhi
8 January 1948

My dear Kher,

I have received from Jawaharlal a copy of your letter dated 15 December 1947 regarding the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh]. I am rather surprised to read paragraph 2 of that letter referring to the proceedings of the Prime Ministers' conference convened by me in November last. You will recall that it was considered that the reports of the activities of organisations like the RSS were somewhat exaggerated and that it was not necessary to take such a serious view of this matter. It was also agreed that where any province felt that any action was necessary it could take it; on the other hand, your letter seems to suggest that we have not taken any action whatsoever and that there is dilatoriness at the Centre.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri B. G. Kher
Prime Minister
Bombay

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Bombay
13 January 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have received your letter of 8 January.

My letter which you have referred to was sent in reply to the Prime Minister's letter dated 7 December in which he had expressed some concern at the way the activities of the RSS were handled by the provincial Governments. I hope you have seen it also. I felt that in my reply I should, while pointing out that

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the question had been discussed at the conference called by you, also mention how the discussion disclosed a difference in the views of provinces in this matter.

On the other point made in my reply, I find that the minutes of the conference mention that a circular should be issued by the Central Government warning Government servants that it was contrary to Government Servants' Conduct Rules to participate in the activities or to become members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. On enquiring with the departments concerned I learnt that no circular on the point had been so far received. There is no suggestion that the Central Government had not taken any action whatsoever and/or that there was dilatoriness at the Centre in the letter.

Yours sincerely,
B. G. Kher

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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5 February 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

I am sending herewith copies of two letters with their enclosures which I have received from Balasaheb Kher. Perhaps you might like to take it up in the Working Committee for disciplinary action.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Bombay
30 January 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I forward for your information the purport of a speech reported to have been made by Mr. Jedhe, President of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, in Belgaum district on 13 January 1948 as reported in the Kannada bi-weekly Sandesh.

Yours sincerely,
B. G. Kher

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Messrs Baburao Dalal and K. V. Shapurkar publish the following important particulars in Sandesh from a speech reported to have been made by Mr. Keshavarao Jedhe, President, Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, at Nandgad, Belgaum district, on 13-1-1948. The said particulars are as under:

"(1) What has our Bombay Cabinet done? Balasaheb is our Premier. What is there in his hands? All authority vests in Morarjibhai. Balasaheb, at the most, receives addresses and laughs heartily. (2) Influence is the order of the day in the Congress. The Ministers give high positions and posts to their relatives. (3) Even some women have been raised to high positions merely because they took part in Gandhiji's prayers. The husband of a lady who was beating the cymbals at the prayers has been elevated to the position of Health Minister of India. The name of this lady is Mrs. Hansa Mehta.[1] (4) Kashmir is going to be absorbed in Pakistan. The molehill of this Kashmir affair has been turned into a big mountain simply because Kashmir is the native place of Pandit Nehru. If this were not the case how is it that Pandit Nehru has not cared to look into the question of Hyderabad where hundreds of our people are dying? (5) Mr. Dahyabhai[2] says that Bombay cannot be included in the Samyukta Maharashtra province. Is Bombay his father's property? All powers vest at present in the capitalists. (6) Mr. Mangaldas Pakvasa[3] meets Mr. Vallabhbhai, holds some private conversations with him, and within two days of this interview he is appointed as a Governor. I am at a loss to find out the secret underlying all this. (7) Most of our Assembly members elected on the Congress ticket are poor. Where did the money which was spent on these MLAs come from? Last time Walchand Sethji had stood for election against me. This time the Congress took Rs. 50,000 from his brother and gave him its ticket. It is this fifty thousand rupees that was spent on the election of the rest of the Congress MLAs. This will suffice to show the trend of our MLAs in casting their votes. (8) When did the present Ministers, Messrs M. P. Patil and L. M. Patil, enter the Congress? They came after me. (9) We are not supplied with arms when we apply for them. Is this due to the fear that we may use them against the Marwaris? (10) I want a labour government. I do not want a capitalistic government. I have got sufficient money from my father. I am not at all anxious to hunt for money from others. I do not hanker after power and honour."

1 Vice-Chancellor, Baroda University, 1949-50; member, CA; member of delegation of Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, 1948

2 Son of Sardar Patel; member of Congress, 1924-56; member, Bombay PCC, 1946-56; first elected to Rajya Sabha, 1958; re-elected 1964; now Swatantra Party leader in Rajya Sabha; business man by profession

3 President, Bombay Legislative Council from July 1937 to August 1947; Governor of MP and acting Governor of Bombay, 1954-55

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People were talking among themselves whether Mr. Jedhe was speaking about a united Maharashtra or was only vomiting poison against the Congress.

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Bombay
11 February 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I had informed you that it would not be necessary to appoint a temporary judge during the deputation of Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha, who has been called to do work on the Income-tax Committee. I have since received a letter from the Chief Justice of Bombay who says that as, in addition to Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha, Mr. Justice Bavdekar is also being taken away in connection with the dispute between the Provinces of Bihar and Orissa, it would be best to appoint somebody in place of Mr. Justice Rajadhayksha. He says that this involves a point of principle. His view is that the matter should be referred to the Chief Justice of India. I enclose a copy of his letter. The appointment becomes necessary as Mr. Justice Sen has applied for leave before the long vacation. As we are always drawing upon the High Court to supply Judges for our work and keep them engaged fairly long, an appointment may become necessary. That depends on how long Mr. Justice Bavdekar is likely to be required.

Yours sincerely,
B. G. Kher

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

High Court
Bombay
10 February 1948

My dear Prime Minister,

As you know, I had asked for an acting judge when Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha was called away to the Income-tax Committee. I did not press for the appointment when I found that there was a difference of opinion between the Government of India and the Provincial Government supported by the Chief Justice. From today I am losing Mr. Justice Bavdekar, who has been

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requested to do some important work in connection with the dispute between the provinces of Bihar and Orissa. He is likely to be away for six or eight weeks. Mr. Justice Sen has applied for leave for one month before the long vacation, i.e. about the middle of March. Therefore, in March I will find myself with three judges short. I have been doing my best to tackle the arrears, and whenever I find I have made some headway I lose one or other of my judges.

May I therefore request you once more to press the claim of Mr. Honawar to act in place of Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha before the Government of India? I sincerely hope that the Government of India will be more amenable to my suggestion than they were on the last occasion. The difference of opinion between the Government of India on the one hand and the High Court and the Provincial Government on the other raises, as you will fully realise, a very important and vital question of principle. Its importance extends far beyond this particular question of who should be appointed in place of Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha. We are all agreed, including the Government of India, that judicial appointments should not be influenced by political considerations and should not be dictated by the executive. We have not merely to think of the Government of India as it is at present constituted, but the possibility of its changing its complexion in the future, and therefore a precedent now established might have far-reaching effects on the independence and integrity of the High Court in days to come. I should therefore suggest that on any occasion when the Government of India do not find their way to accept the recommendation of the Prime Minister of a province supported by the Chief Justice, the matter should be referred to the Chief Justice of India. In this case also I feel therefore that if the Government of India cannot see their way to accept our recommendation they should place all the papers before the Chief Justice of India and invite his opinion.

Yours sincerely,
M. C. Chagla[1]

The Hon'ble Mr. B. G. Kher
Prime Minister of Bombay

[1] Barrister-at-law; Chief Justice of Bombay High Court from 1947 to 1958; on retirement served as High Commissioner in London and then as Ambassador in Washington; Education Minister in 1963 under Nehru and was Minister for External Affairs for a short period in the second Ministry formed by Mrs. Gandhi in 1967; resigned in 1968

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New Delhi
17 February 1948

My dear Kher,

Thank you for your letter of 11 February, 1948. I have yet to receive your recommendation. It is therefore incorrect for the Chief Justice to say that you made any recommendation and that it was supported by the Chief Justice. Admittedly your first recommendation was not based on full appreciation of the facts involved. I, therefore, thought it best that you should be apprised of all the facts and reconsider your previous recommendation in the light of those facts.

2. There is no question of any reference being made to the Chief Justice of India because of any disagreement between the Government of India and the Provincial Government. All cases of appointments to provincial High Courts go to the Chief Justice of India before they are finalised. I do not know from where the Chief Justice got the idea that any question is involved of judicial appointments being influenced by political considerations or being dictated by the executive. We have also to safeguard individual officers against supersession on purely personal predilections.

3. In any case I feel that the time has come when further correspondence on this matter should cease. I have already told you how I view the matter. It is now for you to make your final recommendation if you wish any substitute to be appointed in place of either Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha or Mr. Justice Bavdekar. I presume it would be the latter, because apparently when I discussed this matter with you in Bombay it seemed you did not want a substitute for Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha on account of the changes which you proposed in civil and criminal jurisdiction of the Bombay High Court.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri B. G. Kher
Bombay

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New Delhi
26 February 1949

My dear Vallabhbhai,

The decision of the Bombay Legislative Assembly in favour of the creation of a Maharashtra province, including Bombay city, has brought matters to a head. I have no doubt that this decision will create a feeling of instability in Bombay and even business might suffer. I think the sooner some kind of Government policy is announced in regard to this the better. The best course would be for the AICC Sub-committee on Linguistic Provinces to prepare its report and publish it. Government may then accept its principles or at any rate express its general agreement with them. I am afraid all of us are terribly busy. None the less, we have to take this matter in hand as early as possible.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Government House
Bombay
Bombay Governor's Camp
19 March 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I have now completed my tour of three districts of Gujarat, viz., Ahmedabad, Kaira and Panch Mahals. You are known, respected and loved throughout Gujarat. On the 17th instant my wife and I visited Vallabh Vidya Nagar and the Institute of Agriculture. Under the inspiration of Shri Bhailalbhai D. Patel buildings have sprung up in the former place within 14 months. Before many years there should be a fine institution here in your memory. The Institute of Agriculture also under Dr. M. D. Patel is doing very good work for the agriculturist. I have today returned from a huge meeting at Halol where my wife and I met Shri

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N. K. Desai, secretary of the Backward Class Amelioration Mandal, and saw a gathering of many thousand people, including Naiks. My tour has been most interesting and instructive throughout. We now go to Broach and Surat and return to Bombay on the 24th instant. I sincerely hope that you are now well on the way to your usual health. Please do not forget to take prolonged rest. With best wishes for you and love to Maniben from us both.

Yours sincerely,
Maharaj Singh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
22 March 1948

My dear Sir Maharaj Singh,

Thank you for your letter of 19 March. I am very glad to know that your trip to Gujarat has been so successful and that you enjoyed it so much. I am now much better and am making steady progress, but as you say I have to take prolonged rest.

With kindest regards to both of you from Maniben and myself,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Raja Sir Maharaj Singh
Governor of Bombay
Bombay

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TELEGRAM

Bombay
14 May 1948

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

KINDLY SEND BLESSINGS TO INTUC [Indian National Trade Union Congress] SESSION OPENING BOMBAY SIXTEENTH.

KHANDUBHAI DESAI[1]

[1] Labour leader of Gujarat and one of the organisers of INTUC; trusted lieutenant of Sardar Patel; Union Minister of Labour, 1954-57; Governor of Andhra Pradesh since 1969

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TELEGRAM

Mussoorie
15 May 1948

Khandubhai Desai
Care Intuc
Bombay

PLEASE CONVEY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF INTUC TOMORROW BEGINS. MANY YEARS AGO WHEN HINDUSTAN MAZDOOR SEVAK SANGH WAS FOUNDED UNDER GANDHIJI'S INSPIRATION ITS OBJECTIVE WAS LIMITED. THE IDEA WAS TO START IN SELECT CENTRES A MODEL ORGANISATION OF LABOUR WHICH COULD SET AN EXAMPLE OF AMICABLE RELATIONSHIP OF LABOUR WITH EMPLOYERS BASED ON ARBITRATION AND A RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH JUST DEMANDS OF LABOUR WOULD BE MET WITHOUT DEPRIVING EMPLOYER OF HIS LEGITIMATE SHARE. WHEREVER THIS ORGANISATION WAS STARTED IT HAS MET WITH CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS. IT HAS SUCCEEDED NOT ONLY IN RESTORING FEELINGS OF AMITY AND GOODWILL BETWEEN EMPLOYER AND LABOUR BUT ALSO IN EVOLVING A NEW CONCEPTION OF LABOUR'S DUTIES TO ITS OWN CASE AND TO NATION AT LARGE. HANDICAPS OF BEING ENGAGED IN STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM FROM ALIEN RULE RETARDED GROWTH OF THIS INSTITUTION BUT WITHIN LIMITS THE MOVEMENT PROSPERED AND REGISTERED SOME NOTABLE SUCCESSES AND ADVANCE. THESE HANDICAPS AFFECTED NOT ONLY GROWTH OF THIS MOVEMENT BUT ALSO ENTIRE LABOUR MOVEMENT. THE WITHDRAWAL FROM FIELD OF CONGRESS ELEMENTS GAVE OPPORTUNITY TO CERTAIN SECTIONS OF PEOPLE TO EXPLOIT SITUATION TO THEIR ADVANTAGE AND GAIN. PLACING BEFORE LABOUR VISIONS OF AN UNREALISABLE UTOPIA THESE UNSOCIAL ELEMENTS MISLED LABOUR MOVEMENT INTO CHANNELS, WHICH BY UNNECESSARILY ACCENTUATING HOSTILITY AND WEAKENING COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC POSITION, HAVE DONE INCALCULABLE HARM TO INTERESTS OF BOTH LABOUR AND COUNTRY. PROFESSING THEMSELVES AS PARTNERS IN THE COMMON ADVENTURE OF WAR AGAINST TOTALITARIAN REGIME THESE SO-CALLED FRIENDS OF LABOUR MERELY SOUGHT TO INCREASE THEIR OWN STRENGTH AT THE EXPENSE OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND COUNTRY'S NATIONAL ORGANISATION.

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WE HAD HOPED THAT WITH A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IN OFFICE SANER COUNSELS WOULD PREVAIL AND REALISATION OF STAKES INVOLVED AND COUNTRY'S WELFARE AND INTEREST WOULD BRING ABOUT SOME IMPROVEMENT, BUT MUCH TO OUR DISAPPOINTMENT AND REGRET HARMFUL ACTIVITIES CONTINUE AND INJURY TO CAUSE OF LABOUR AND COUNTRY MULTIPLIED. WE ALSO FOUND THAT FORUM OF TRADE UNIONS WAS BEING SHAMEFULLY EXPLOITED AND DISGRACEFULLY UTILISED FOR FURTHERANCE OF PARTY ENDS AND TO THE DETRIMENT OF LABOUR. FACED WITH THIS CHALLENGE THE CONGRESS DECIDED TO ENTER THE FIELD WITH ITS OWN ORGANISATION BASED NOT ON EXPLOITATION BUT ON JUSTICE AND FAIRPLAY FOR ALL INTERESTS AND SUPREME NEED FOR COUNTRY'S WELFARE. WITHIN SHORT TIME THAT THE NEW ORGANISATION OF INTUC HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE IT HAS SECURED ENCOURAGING AND SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FROM COUNTRY IN GENERAL AND LABOUR IN PARTICULAR. MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY HAVE POINTED OUT SUPREME NEED FOR MORE AND MORE PRODUCTION COMBINED WITH EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRODUCT OF INDUSTRY. [there] IS COMMON MEASURE OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, EMPLOYERS AND LABOUR AND WE ARE TRYING TO SECURE ITS IMPLEMENTATION BY AN INDUSTRIAL TRUCE FOR THREE YEARS. IT IS DEFINITELY TO COUNTRY'S DETRIMENT TO PAY LIP HOMAGE TO THIS TRUCE AND TO DISOWN IT IN ACTION. THAT IS NOT THE WAY OF INTUC. INTUC STANDS BY ITS PLEDGE AND SHALL HONOUR IT BOTH TO LABOUR MOVEMENT AND TO COUNTRY AT LARGE. I AM SURE BY ADHERING STEADFASTLY TO ITS AIMS AND OBJECTS AND SERVING WITH SELFLESS DEVOTION THE CAUSE OF LABOUR AND COUNTRY ITS RANKS WILL INCREASE AND THE ORGANISATION WILL PROSPER. IT WILL SAVE LABOUR FROM INTERESTED AND SELFSEEKING LEADERSHIP OF THE PAST. IT WILL SAVE LABOUR AND COUNTRY FROM INJURIOUS UNCERTAINTIES AND HESITATIONS OF THE PRESENT. IT WILL SAFEGUARD BOTH FOR COUNTRY AND LABOUR INDUSTRIAL PEACE AND PROSPERITY OF THE FUTURE WITHOUT WHICH WE CAN NEVER HOPE TO ATTAIN THE PLACE WHICH OUR MOTHERLAND IS ENTITLED TO HAVING DUE REGARD TO ITS POTENTIALITIES AND RESOURCES. MAY THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF INTUC SUCCEED IN GIVING THE CORRECT LEAD TO THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND MAY SUCCESS ATTEND THE EFFORTS OF THE ORGANISATION AND ITS WORKERS ENDS.

VALLABHBHAI

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
30 November 1948

Khandubhai Desai
Care Labour
Ahmedabad

ON THIRTYFIRST ANNIVERSARY OF SANGH I HAVE GREAT PLEASURE IN SENDING FOLLOWING MESSAGE BEGINS THE SANGH OWES ITS INCEPTION AND RAPID PROGRESS WHICH IT HAS MADE TO THE INSPIRATION AND BLESSINGS WHICH IT ALWAYS RECEIVED FROM GANDHIJI. IT HAS SET A NOBLE EXAMPLE FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES ON THE PRINCIPLE OF ARBITRATION. IT HAS ALSO BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN MAINTAINING A CONSISTENT RECORD OF CONCILIATION AND HARMONY BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND LABOUR. BY ITS BRILLIANT EXAMPLE IT HAS PROMOTED THE CAUSE OF GANDHIJI'S IDEALS IN THE FIELD OF LABOUR IN OTHER PLACES AS WELL AND TODAY IT IS LARGELY DUE TO THE SUCCESS WHICH HAS ATTENDED THE EXPERIMENT IN AHMEDABAD THAT INDIAN NATIONAL TRADE UNION CONGRESS IS SO FIRMLY ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT INDIA. IT HAS NOW BECOME A PREMIER ORGANISATION OF LABOUR IN WHOLE COUNTRY. IT IS ALL THE MORE INCUMBENT ON THIS INSTITUTION AND THE LARGER ORGANISATION, INDIAN NATIONAL TRADE UNION CONGRESS, TO CONTINUE TO FOLLOW GANDHIJI'S IDEALS AS SUCCESSFULLY AFTER HIS DEATH AS IT DID DURING HIS LIFETIME. I HAVE NO DOUBT HIS KINDLY ATTENTION BENEVOLENT CARE AND AFFECTIONATE BLESSINGS WOULD ALWAYS BE WITH IT AND WILL ENSURE SUCCESS FOR ITS EXERTIONS END.

VALLABHBHAI

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TELEGRAM

Dehra Dun
30 June 1948

Shri Khandubhai Desai
Majur Mahajan Karyalaya
Ahmedabad

HAVE JUST HEARD FROM BENGAL THAT SURESH BANARJEE PROPOSES ORGANISE ONEDAY PROTEST STRIKE IN JUTE MILLS OF BENGAL. THIS WOULD INVOLVE 300000 JUTE WORKERS AND IS QUITE CONTRARY TO OUR POLICY. PLEASE INSTRUCT DR. SURESH BANARJEE NOT TO LAUNCH THIS STRIKE AND TO SEEK AMICABLE AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IF NECESSARY BY ARBITRATION.

VALLABHBHAI

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Bombay
26 July 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I enclose a copy of the letter addressed to me by certain members of the Legislative Assembly of this province in connection with their grievance regarding inadequate representation of the masses in the various services of this Government. I also enclose a copy of the note which explains the position as it obtains at present.

The issue raised is important and has a vital bearing on the integrity and efficiency of public administration. I suggest that this question may be considered in a conference at the Centre and certain broad principles evolved which may be recommended to all the Provincial Governments in the Indian Union for adoption.

Yours sincerely,
B. G. Kher

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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PS.

Some public statement from you or the Prime Minister may help.

B. G. K.

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS

To
The Premier
Government of Bombay
Bombay

Sir,

. . . The High Court has advertised for recruiting two posts of Assistant Judges from the Bar. Even interviews of some candidates, we learn, have already taken place and two posts are being shortly filled up. We further learn that two more posts are going to be created as a result of the merger of the States. In this regard, we are constrained to make the following representation in view of the agitation in the public in our province that is now going on.

The posts are not frequently recurring in general. In particular, we from Karnatak hear about these posts being filled up hardly once in many years. As such, we know one Mr. Hulkoti who was once recruited as an Assistant Judge from the Bar from Karnatak as long back as 1928. Later on, the only other occasion was when Mr. Dalvi was appointed in about 1932 from Belgaum.

One more fact we wish to bring to your notice is that good many posts of Civil Judges, Junior Division, and as many of Resident Magistrates also were filled up recently. Looking to the actual statistics of those appointments, it has come to be that nearly 75-80% of those appointments have gone to advanced classes in the garb of efficiency. If this is to be the policy of recruitment to the public service, particularly in respect of key and important posts, we are afraid that the masses will have no effective share in the administration of the State. Naturally, this has created a sort of discontent and resentment amongst the public. Also, there are other interests which are at variance with us, taking undue advantage of such acts of commission and omission on the part of the Government. . . .

Yours sincerely,
7 MLAs from Karnatak

Dharwar
4 May 1948

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New Delhi
28 July 1948

My dear Balasaheb,

Thank you for your letter of 26 July 1948.

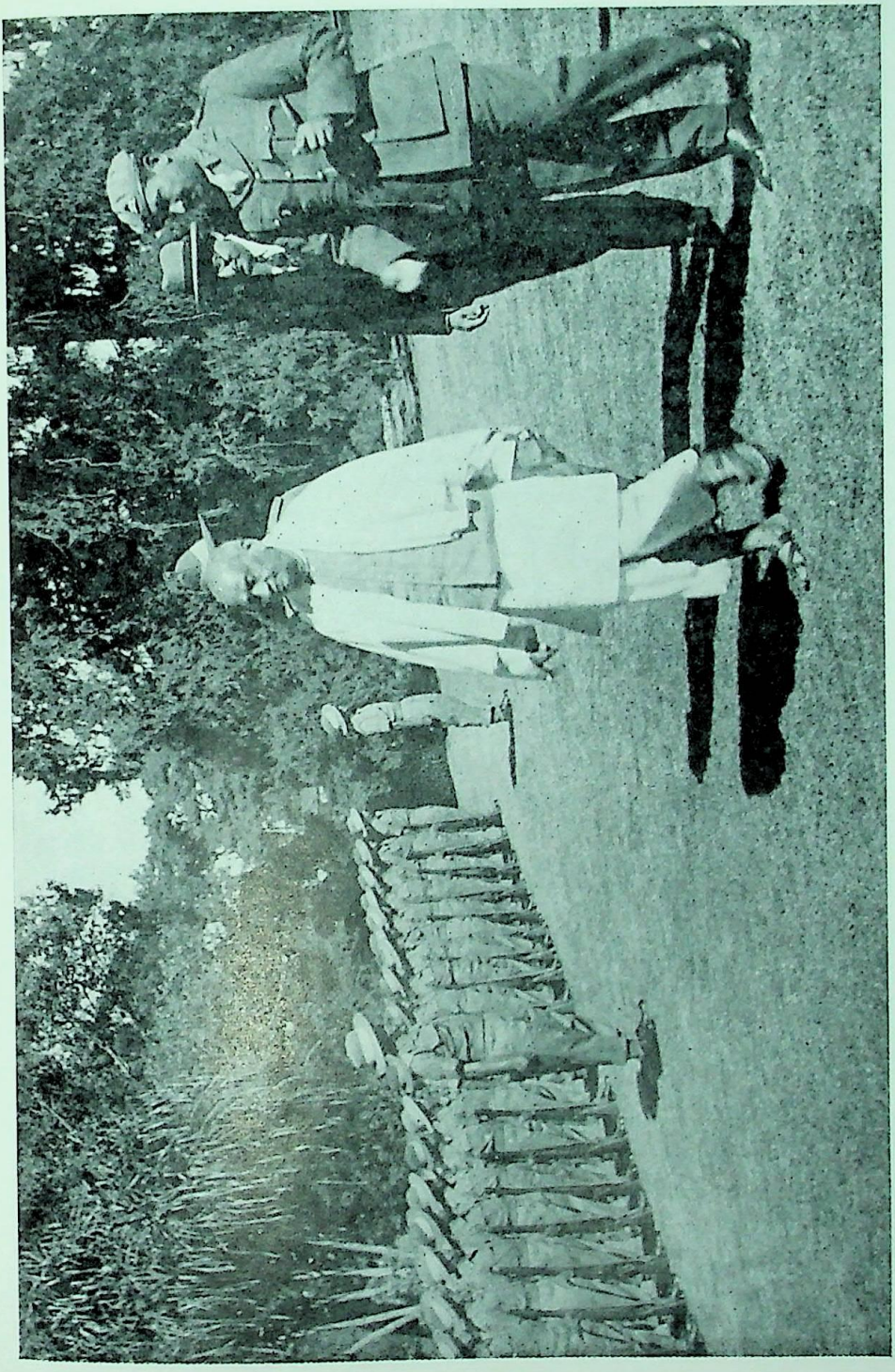
I think the move to have appointments on the basis of communities rather than on merits has to be resisted everywhere. In the Centre, I have taken that attitude, and that attitude has been approved by the Cabinet, that appointments by competition shall be by merit except for reservation in favour of scheduled castes.

As regards other posts, we have reserved vacancies according to the population of Hindus, including scheduled castes, Muslims and other minorities. There is no further sub-division of other minorities or no such division as advanced, intermediate and backward classes as you have in Bombay. It is also wrong to suppose that members of the backward classes can only represent backward classes, or that scheduled castes candidates alone can represent scheduled castes. Consistent with the fundamental rights and also the necessity of maintaining the maximum possible efficiency in our public administration, I do not think we can take any other attitude on this question. I hope, therefore, you will be able to deal with this matter firmly and bring these members to the realisation of what they owe to the country in preference to what they owe on a narrow construction of their duties to their community.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. B. G. Kher
Bombay

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SARDAR PATEL INSPECTS A GUARD OF HONOUR DURING HIS VISIT TO ASSAM. GOVERNOR AKBAR HYDARI IS WALKING JUST BEHIND HIM

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THE SARDAR SEEN IN A LIGHTER MOOD AT A RECEPTION IN HIS HONOUR BY THE PREMIER OF BIHAR, S. K. SINHA, WHEN HE VISITED PATNA IN JANUARY 1948. SYED MAHMUD, A MINISTER, IS ON THE SARDAR'S LEFT AND THE PREMIER ON HIS RIGHT

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Haider Bldg.
Fazal Road
Colaba
Bombay
25 September 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Several times when you were in Bombay during the last one year I tried to see you but unfortunately your private secretary could not give me an appointment. Last time when I was in Delhi I again tried to see you but I was told by your private secretary that he could not give me an appointment as you were busy that day. I left my message with Patil and asked him to convey it to you. I am sure he must have given you my message.

2. It was a pleasure to know that you had fully recovered and were able again to shoulder the responsibilities of your high office at such a critical juncture in the history of India. I know and fully realise how valuable your services are to our country. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you heartily for the success in Hyderabad. It has much improved the situation in the country and has given such a relief to the people.

3. I am writing this letter concerning the two Muslim seats which have just fallen vacant in the Bombay Legislative Assembly, one in Ahmedabad district and another in the East Khandesh district. I have been approached to stand as a candidate, but before deciding anything I have to get your permission for putting any Muslim candidates to contest these seats on behalf of the Congress and whether you would like the idea of my contesting any of these two seats. If you permit, then I shall consult the Provincial Congress Committee concerned.

Hope and trust it will find you in good health.

With respectful regards,

Yours very sincerely,
M. Y. Nurie

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
28 September 1948

My dear Nurie,

Thank you for your letter of 25 September 1948.

During my last visit to Bombay I had a very heavy programme and my health was not quite satisfactory. In Delhi also I have had a most busy time since I returned from Dehra Dun.

As regards contesting the two Muslim seats, I am not in favour of it so long as the present system of separate electorates remains. I think it would be embarrassing to us to contest these seats till then. I would, therefore, advise you not to put up any Muslim candidates.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

M. Y. Nurie, Esq.
Vice-President
Bombay Provincial Congress Committee
Haider Building
Colaba
Bombay

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106 Constitution House
Curzon Road
New Delhi
8 November 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

A few days ago I was surprised to read a news item in the Bombay papers that Rajaji has promised to award a cup in the name of the Governor-General for a race to be run in Bombay on 5 March 1949 and that he intends coming down to the city on that occasion. When the Governor of Bombay received a request from the Western India Turf Club for presentation of a cup in his name he turned down the request on my advice. The effect,

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by contrast, of the Governor-General's active support for horse-racing on our policy regarding a ban on gambling would be very embarrassing for us and I would ask for your advice whether I should write to him and request him to reconsider his decision.

Yours sincerely,
B. G. Kher

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

154

New Delhi
9 November 1948

My dear Balasaheb,

Please refer to your letter dated 8 November 1948 about the Governor-General's cup for the Bombay races. I have written to Rajaji about it and will let you know.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. B. G. Kher
New Delhi

155

New Delhi
9 November 1948

My dear Rajaji,

There was a report in the Press some time ago that you had promised to award a cup in the name of the Governor-General for a race to be run in Bombay on 5 March 1949 and that you intended to go to the city on that occasion. I hope this is not correct. Perhaps you may not be aware that the Bombay Government's policy is to stop racing altogether as they regard it as a form of gambling. The Governor of Bombay wanted to perform a similar function, which he had to abandon on account of this policy of his Government. It would be most embarrassing to them if you were to go there for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Mr. Rajagopalachari
Governor-General of India
New Delhi

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Government House
New Delhi
10 November 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your note of 9 November about Bombay races. The Governor-General's cup was continued as requested by them. But the report about my going to Bombay for the races is all wrong. It was never my intention.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
11 November 1948

My dear Balasaheb,

I wrote to the Governor-General about the Governor-General's cup. He has replied that the Governor-General's cup was continued as requested by the authorities of the WITC [Western India Turf Club]. But the report about his going to Bombay for the races is incorrect and it was never his intention to do so.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Balasaheb Kher
Bombay

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New Delhi
21 December 1948

My dear Morarji,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from Walchand [Hirachand][1]. I should like to know what the position is.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Morarji Desai
Home Minister
Bombay

ENCLOSURE

Construction House
Bellard Estate
Bombay
14 December 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Last week the Hon. Mr. Tapase, Minister for Local Self-Government, Government of Bombay, told Mr. Lalchand,[2] whom he met accidentally at a function at Taj [Mahal Hotel], that the Hon. Mr. B.G. Kher and the Hon. Mr. Morarji Desai had decided to have a municipality at Walchandnagar. In spite of this I understood that he has put a note to the contrary. Mr. Vyas, Central Division Commissioner, who was at Walchandnagar, told Mr. Gulabchandbhai[3] the same thing.

Walchandnagar has done a lot of things such as consolidation of small holdings, providing amenities and other things for labour, etc. They have completely housed all their labour, both agricultural and factory, and very little of the housing is left over awaiting the supply of sheets by the Government.

[1] Leading industrialist of Bombay who pioneered shipbuilding and manufacture of aircraft
[2] Youngest brother of Walchand Hirachand
[3] Younger brother of Walchand Hirachand

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Both the Hon. Mr. Kher and the Hon. Mr. Morarjibhai, in spite of invitations from Mr. Gulabchand, have not been to Walchandnagar for a considerable time. Will you kindly write to them politely bringing to their notice what the Local Self-Government Minister told Mr. Lalchand? The Hon. Minister has not told me anything about the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Walchand Hirachand

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Secretariat
Bombay
December 1948

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

Will you please see your letter dated 21 December 1948 enclosing a copy of a letter dated 14 December 1948 addressed to you by Mr. Walchand Hirachand regarding the establishment of a municipality at Walchandnagar. In paragraph 1 of his letter Mr. Walchand refers to the Hon'ble Mr. Tapase as the Minister for Local Self-Government. The Hon'ble Mr. Vartak is, however, in charge of local self-government, and on being consulted Mr. Vartak informs me that the statement made in paragraph 1 of Mr. Walchand's letter is absolutely incorrect and that all that he had told Mr. Walchand was that Government had decided to establish a municipality at Walchandnagar. I am fully aware of the amenities provided by Mr. Walchand to his employees at Walchandnagar, but this cannot be a ground for not establishing a local body at Walchandnagar. As long ago as September 1946 the Bombay Government had received complaints to the effect that outsiders, and especially persons wearing khaddar dress, are not allowed to enter the gates of Walchandnagar, which is a private estate, and even the road—six miles in length—leading from the Indapur Baramati road to Walchandnagar is not allowed to be used by outsiders without the permission of the factory managers. It was further represented to this Government that the whole estate, including the houses of labourers, is protected by wire fencing and that the residents are not allowed to attend meetings held in the neighbouring villages even. The inhabitants of Walchandnagar were denied the elementary rights of freedom of movement and of association, and were treated as if they were mere slaves of

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the factory owners. In one of the complaints received by us, it was stated that even such an eminent person as Mr. Shankarrao Deo was not allowed to use the road referred to above during January 1946, and that similar treatment had been meted out to some other well-known persons. After a thorough enquiry and after consultation with our legal advisers, it was decided to establish a municipality at Walchandnagar if the reactions of the local inhabitants were favourable to this proposal. The mamlatdar [revenue collector] concerned held a meeting at Walchandnagar during August 1947 which was attended by about 500 persons, and a large majority of the inhabitants of Walchandnagar appeared to be in favour of establishing a municipality at that place. Enquiries were made of some provincial Governments in India as to how a similar problem had been tackled by them. We were informed by the Government of Bihar that Dalmianagar, which is a private estate, has been included in the Dalmianagar-Dehri Notified Area Committee since 1942. It has also been ascertained that Jamshedpur has been constituted a notified area committee under Section 388 of the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act, 1923. The matter was considered in all its aspects by all the Hon'ble Ministers of this Government and the decision to have a municipality at Walchandnagar was reached by the Cabinet. There is nothing unusual in this decision as will be perceived from the facts stated above. If the residents of Dalmianagar and Jamshedpur can have a local body, there is no reason why the residents of Walchandnagar should not be extended a similar facility to train themselves in the art of local self-government. From the strictly legal point of view, Walchandnagar is a hamlet of the revenue village of Kalamb and Government is quite competent to establish a village panchayat or a municipality for this area. The fact that it is a privately owned estate does not affect the merits of the case.

I am sure you will now be convinced that the decision taken by the Bombay Government is perfectly just and proper and that the attitude of Mr. Walchand is not reasonable.

Yours sincerely,
Morarji Desai

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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106 Constitution House
Curzon Road
New Delhi
21 November 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I enclose a copy of my letter and of its accompaniment which I have sent today to Mr. S. N. Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Constituent Assembly of India, with reference to his circular dated 20 November 1948 to all representatives from Governors' Provinces in the Constituent Assembly regarding a second chamber in the provinces. I have spoken to you already about my views on this subject and will be grateful if you will inform me what you think about it.

Yours sincerely,
B. G. Kher

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

106 Constitution House
Curzon Road
New Delhi
21 November 1948

Dear Shri Mukherjee,

I am in receipt of your circular dated 20 November 1948 requesting members of the Constituent Assembly from each province to assemble on the date and at the time indicated in it for the purpose of considering and deciding the question whether an Upper House should be instituted for their respective provinces. So far as Bombay province is concerned, a meeting of all the members of the Constituent Assembly elected from the province was convened by me in the Constitution House on 20 July 1947 to consider the question of a second chamber for the Province of Bombay. The question was fully discussed and it was unanimously resolved that the province should have a second chamber for a period of first ten years of the new constitution and that thereafter it should be open to the province to continue or to discon-

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tinue the second chamber by so amending the Constitution. I sent a report accordingly on 20 July 1947 to the Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chairman, Provincial Constitution Committee. I enclose a copy of this report for ready reference. I do not know whether this report has been sent to the Constituent Assembly office and if so, whether it is intended that another meeting of the members of the Constituent Assembly from Bombay should be convened to consider the same question. I request that the point may be cleared up urgently to enable us to decide whether another meeting should be held on Tuesday the 23rd instant as indicated in the circular.

Yours,
B. G. Kher

Shri S. N. Mukherjee
Joint Secretary
Constituent Assembly of India
Council House
New Delhi

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New Delhi
23/24 November 1948

My dear Balasaheb,

Thank you for your letter of 21 November 1948.

I think the stand which you have taken in regard to the second chamber is quite correct.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri B. G. Kher
Bombay

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New Delhi
10 December 1948

My dear Harilal,

I am sending herewith a cutting from an Ahmednagar—6th November '48—newspaper Azad Hind, which refers to the visit of the Chief Justice of Bombay, Mr. M. C. Chagla, to Jalgaon. If what is stated is correct, it is most unfortunate. Whatever the

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position of the Chief Justice of the High Court may be, I am sure you will agree that his public conduct should be in keeping with Government policy on important matters like prohibition. If this is not done, both the judiciary and the Government are bound to be brought into public ridicule; and should there be any breach of the law, the position would be most embarrassing.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sir Harilal J. Kania
Chief Justice of India
New Delhi

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New Delhi
11 December 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

Your letter of the 10th instant enclosing a cutting from the Azad Hind to hand.

The reporter appears to be someone not familiar with an entertainment to dinner on the English style. I do not know if the paper has some substantial circulation or is a local rag.

Be that as it may, you will appreciate that neither the Federal Court nor the Chief Justice of India has any power of supervision under the Constitution Act over the provincial High Courts or the judges of the High Courts even in respect of their judicial work. Much less therefore I have any voice in the regulation of the life of a provincial chief justice or a judge, outside his court hours. I do not know therefore what I can do in the matter.

Whatever the individual views of judges about the prohibition policy may be, I do not think, in the administration of law, they bring in their personal views.

Yours sincerely,
H. J. Kania

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
11 December 1948

My dear Harilal,

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 1948. I sent my letter merely for your information. I knew quite well that you would not be able to do anything officially in the matter, but I thought that if and when you found an opportunity to speak to the Chief Justice of Bombay High Court you might be able to drop a hint. You have probably misunderstood the last sentence of my letter. There was no suggestion that the judges might bring in their personal views in the administration of the law, but I was referring to the possibility of some breach of the law being committed which might be embarrassing to the Chief Justice as well as to the Provincial Government.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Harilal J. Kania
Chief Justice of India
New Delhi

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New Delhi
14 December 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

Your letter of the 11th instant to hand. I shall certainly speak to the Chief Justice of Bombay when I have occasion to see him. I may, however, mention that he may be going to Europe when his court closes in April and, if so, I am unable to say when I shall see him.

If, however, in the interval there arises an occasion for me to go to Bombay, I shall do the needful.

I apprehend no breach of peace in the province of Bombay because of the prohibition policy of that Government.

Yours sincerely,
H. J. Kania

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Civil Lines
Nagpur
1 January 1949

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Some thoughts have been agitating me and I want to place them before you.

The problem of the country as I see it is one of character, both individual and public. The present tendency in industry is to attempt to obtain more wages with less effort. Our so-called labour leaders are egging on labourers in organised trades to strike and ask for more. In politics the tendency is to obtain power by forming a caucus—a sort of Tammany ring which attempts to base itself on local prejudices. On our side this local prejudice is taking an anti-Brahmin shape as you well know.

Now, if this rot is to be stopped, people of character must utilise all their time in educating the people in the right way. While Gandhiji was there, the leaders of the Congress under his inspiring leadership and towering moral strength were doing this. And that is why the Congress organisation had secured such a hold on the people—and for the good. But now people of character are either losing it or are in high places with other responsibilities, and they have no time for their normal and proper function of educating the people. The Congress organisation is therefore fast degenerating, and may very soon lose hold on the people. If this is to stop, people in high places, or may I say, people who have an aptitude for constructive work, must come out and educate the people through their work and activities and thus raise their moral stature and make them better fitted for democracy.

Let me claim, with humility, that I feel that I would probably be able to fill such a role; in any case, such influence as I can exert for the good of the country should not be lost by a spell of office. I remember once Gandhiji at Delhi advising me to come out, but he then said, not just yet. He is now no more for guidance, and I must therefore look up to people like you for a way out.

I find that the Congress organisation as an organisation cannot work constructively. Its existence is no help to Government

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in carrying out its schemes. And it is not because in the CP Marathi the Ministers do not command the confidence of the organisation. It is so, more or less, everywhere. It is because the organisation is riddled with factions and was never trained for work but only for destruction of British imperialism. It is because there is lust for power everywhere.

If I come out now, I will get the added strength of leaving a good job, much before its time, for a particular mission and this will help me in my work.

Let me make it quite clear that my relations with my colleagues and the Premier are very cordial, and there is no intention on my part of trying to quit office under a laudable pretext. I am writing what I am feeling.

It may be that I may be disillusioned: it may turn out that I am able to do more work in a position like the present one than outside. But even so I would not lose anything. On the other hand, by continuing at the end of my period, I will again have to throw myself on the people for my election if I have to come back, and I do not think I can ask anybody for anything. Even last time in the elections, Gandhiji asked me not to ask the public for a vote and not to spend money. I really regret that I did not keep his precepts to the letter, but I now feel that there is much in what he told me then. In fact, he could see things much further than ordinary men. But then I was never a minister. Now I know what it is to be one. And though I may again be a minister after the next elections, the main problem would be left untouched.

I shall be grateful for your advice and your ashirvad [blessings]. I find I am writing this letter to you on New Year's Day, and I pray to God that He may spare you long for greater service to India.

Yours sincerely,
R. K. Patil

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
5 January 1949

My dear Patil,

Thank you for your letter of 1 January 1949 and for your good wishes, which I warmly reciprocate.

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2. I quite realise your feelings and sentiments. The question really boils down to this: where it would be possible for you to render the best service to your country. From my point of view, the answer is obvious. If I did not myself feel that it was in the interests of the country that I should be in office, I would not be for a day where I am. The Central and Provincial Governments are faced with tremendous difficulties and problems. They require the services of the best amongst Congressmen. It is true that the Congress organisation outside also requires similar services, but I do not subscribe to the view that it is not possible for men in office to render service to the organisation outside. Indeed, as far as I can see, it is only men in office who can exercise a steadying influence on the organisation outside. There are undoubtedly bad tendencies; the scramble for power and office is there, but it is not any defeatist attitude that is required but firmness and determination to combat these evils from without and from within. My own candid opinion is that the best service to the Congress organisation can be rendered by ministers setting a tone and standard from the top and studiously and scrupulously avoiding to succumb to pressure from below. It is comparatively easy to have one's career unsullied out of power. It is much more difficult to maintain that reputation and record in power. If you can succeed in achieving the latter, you can be much more of an inspiration and guide to the Congress organisation than you would be if you succeed in the former.

3. I think I have given you sufficient indication of my views. It now remains for you to argue out the answer to the questions which you have posed and do as your conscience guides you.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. R. K. Patil
Minister
Civil Lines
Nagpur

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TELEGRAM

Raipur
6 March 1948

Shankar
Private Secretary to
Sardar Patel
1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi

LEARNT FROM THE RADIO THAT SARDAR PATEL IS INDISPOSED. VERY ANXIOUS PLEASE WIRE HIS HEALTH.

GOVERNOR CP

169

6 March 1948

My dear Mr. Pakvasa,

Thank you for your telegram of the 6th. I have already sent a reply, but I could not say everything in it as I did not wish to give the matter undue publicity.

For some time Sardar had been overstraining himself but we did not think it would lead to such serious consequences. We felt that his constitution would be able to stand up to the strain for a little while longer, after which we expected that a period of comparative rest might be possible.

However, yesterday at about 1 o'clock while he was lunching he had a heart attack which necessitated his immediately retiring to bed. He felt a little nausea as well and was kept on morphia. In the evening he felt slightly better and this morning more so. Dr. [M.D.D.] Gilder[1] has come from Bombay and has examined him. He feels that somewhat prolonged rest would be necessary and that he will have to be careful for the next three or four weeks at least. On the whole, however, he is reacting to the treatment very well.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar

His Excellency Shri Mangaldas Pakvasa
Governor of the CP & Berar
Nagpur

[1] Minister, Public Health and Medicine and Public Works, Bombay

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CHAPTER VI

PUNJAB BORDER TENSION

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Jullundur City
6 January 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I enclose copy of a letter which I have sent today to the Honourable Member in charge of Defence. I shall be grateful if you could be kind enough to come to our help in this matter, which we regard of very great importance.

Yours sincerely,
Swaran Singh[1]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Jullundur City
6 January 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

In September last we telegraphically requested the Ministry of Defence to place at our disposal the following weapons and vehicles immediately:

5,000	.303 rifles,
400	Bren-guns,
800	Sten-guns,
119	very light pistols,
192	hand grenades,
180	jeep cars,
44	armoured cars, and
209	weapon carriers

1 Member of Partition Committee in Punjab; Home Minister, Punjab, 1947-49; Minister of Capital Project and Electricity, Punjab, April-May, 1952; member, Union Cabinet since May 1952: Minister of External Affairs since June 1970

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About two months later, we were informed that Bren-guns could not be issued to the provincial police, that only 200 Sten-guns had been ordered to be issued instead of 800 demanded due to short supply position, and that jeeps, weapon carriers and armoured cars were not available.

2. As you are doubtless aware, since the date on which our demand was made, the position of East Punjab, from the point of view of defence, has worsened and it has become absolutely imperative that our demand should be met in full. With due deference to the views of the Defence Department, I suggest that the position of East Punjab is not being sufficiently appreciated. It lies on the frontiers of India adjoining Pakistan and at any time it might meet the fate which Kashmir has already met. In view of this, the technically correct reply that Bren-guns are not issued to the provincial police appears to be most unimaginative. The mere fact that Bren-guns have not been issued to police in the past is no ground for considering that even in a province so precariously situated as East Punjab, Bren-guns should never be issued to the police. It is of great importance to remember in this connection that Bren-guns are being actually used in West Punjab on its border adjoining East Punjab. It is not understood how in these circumstances the provincial police are expected to cope with the situation merely with .303 rifles or at the most Sten-guns. It may be added that our Border Police is functioning in conjunction with the military at the border and consists of ex-military men fully conversant with the use of such weapons.

3. The Defence Department's reply as far as Sten-guns, jeeps and weapon carriers etc. are concerned, is also most disappointing. For the reasons given already, I suggest that if the supply position is bad, immediate steps should be taken either to manufacture or to import more of these weapons and vehicles.

4. I should be most grateful if you would kindly pay your personal attention to this matter because the need of the province for these weapons and vehicles is most genuine and urgent.

Yours sincerely,
Swaran Singh

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh
Defence Minister
Government of India
New Delhi

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New Delhi
12 January 1948

My dear Baldev Singh,

I have seen a copy of Sardar Swaran Singh's letter of 6 January addressed to you, regarding the requirements of the East Punjab Government in arms and vehicles.

The West Punjab Government is freely arming its people, and we must encourage the East Punjab Government to do likewise. I, therefore, feel that we must try to help the East Punjab Government whose demand is urgent and reasonable.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh
New Delhi

172

New Delhi
9 January 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending you herewith a copy of the report which we have received from a source of the Intelligence Bureau operating at Lahore. You will notice from this that preparations are going on for making the general population war-minded and training it on military lines. It also appears that due to the tribal areas there is no dearth of small arms. It is also likely that a good deal of smuggling has taken place out of our own depots during the time that the Supreme Headquarters were in charge.

2. I do not think we can afford to look at all this with any degree of complacency. While I do not propose to assume any alarmist attitude, I do feel that immediate organisation and preparation on similar lines on at least the borders of Pakistan would have a salutary effect not only in raising the morale of the people on our side but also in creating a deterrent effect on Pakistan. If you agree, I feel that the position requires consultation with our

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military experts and formulation of some sort of plans for the organisation of civil defence in the East Punjab and other border areas. Perhaps the best course would be if we discussed this matter at a meeting of the Defence Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

REPORT FROM AN INTELLIGENCE BUREAU SOURCE AT LAHORE ON PREPARATIONS FOR MILITARY TRAINING

I had further opportunity to live here and visit Sialkot, Gujaranwala, Wazirabad, Hafizabad, Pattoki, Kasur and other places and to meet many people and study the situation.

There is an all-out drive for the enrolment of the National Guards and all the district officers are vigorously engaged in surpassing one another in the number of enrolling able-bodied men for National Guards. They have regular printed forms for enrolment and the candidates are accepted after due medical examination. Every city, town, police station headquarter, a big village and groups of small villages are the training centres of these Guards. Batches are seen drilling everywhere one goes with a spirit and proper discipline. In West Punjab alone their number will be over a lakh.

Every one says and thinks that war is inevitable and they are going to fight for Pakistan and defend it to the last man. Even the rich and men in high society and offices are very sincere and keen to sacrifice their all for Pakistan.

As for Kashmir and Jammu, the Pakistan Government and every Muslim is keen to fight to the finish and conquer it at all costs and sacrifice. Their morale is very high. At Sialkot Cantonment I learnt that almost half the troops stationed there had gone to fight on the Jammu front. They are sent in plain clothes and there have been a good many casualties amongst them. The same is the case at other places where troops are stationed. Every able-bodied man here is a voluntary soldier with a spirit of free service and sacrifice for his dear Pakistan.

The officers in West Punjab holding key positions and high posts are very sincere and honest in eradicating corruption and inefficiency, but the Ministry is both dishonest and inefficient.

The enclosed is a cutting from the C.M.G. [Civil and Military Gazette] which shows how they are infusing Islamic culture and spirit even in the police.

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Pathans are still bringing women and cattle to Gujarat from Jammu and Kashmir State and take them further and sell them openly.

Kasur on the Ferozepur-Lahore border is a big refugee centre of Meos. They are encamped there and it is being planned to settle them on the Pakistan border. Majority of them have their country-made arms. They are dying of hunger but their spirits are high.

Rifles and other small arms are being manufactured in large quantities. There are war clouds on head here and since last 3/4 days the situation is very tense.

The reference of the J&K case to the UNO and the Indian Union's withholding of the payment to Pakistan have created a great panic.

On the 31st, a Sikh was brutally done to death at the railway station, Lahore platform, as he was recognised by someone and yesterday, i.e. on the 2nd [January 1948] one Hindu was stabbed in Guru Arjan Nagar outside Shah-Almi Gate, Lahore city.

There is great hatred for Sikhs in the minds of every Mohammedan here.

The Hindus in Amritsar are also not happy about the behaviour of Sikhs. This is a fact and I know of instances which prove that Sikhs have also looted Hindus and kidnapped their women in the border districts in Pakistan as well as Hindustan.

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New Delhi
27 January 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I am enclosing copy of a confidential circular said to have been issued by the Home Minister of the East Punjab Government. We may perhaps discuss the subject at some time convenient to you.

Yours sincerely,
K. C. Neogy

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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ENCLOSURE

CIRCULAR

The main case regarding communal representation is under consideration by Government. But in the meantime:

(1) Proportions laid down in East Punjab to be observed:

Hindus & others	60 per cent
Sikhs	40 per cent

To apply with effect from 15-8-1947.

(2) In case of any reversions opportunity should be utilized to make up the above proportion.

(3) A statement showing communitywise recruitment since the partition up to 31-12-1947 to be submitted to me by 10-1-1948.

(4) If it is desirable to recruit any officials in the higher grades of clerks, that is, senior clerks, assistants or superintendents, they would not be from the community already in preponderance in that grade.

(5) If the Chief Engineer finds any difficulty in obtaining candidates of requisite qualifications from any community he should report to Government.

(6) Only those Sikhs should be considered who are either Keshadhari or produce the prescribed declaration duly verified by the Sikh Gurdwara Commission.

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New Delhi
29 January 1948

My dear Swaran Singh,

My attention has been drawn to a copy of a circular which, it is alleged, you have issued. I should like to know if the report is correct, and if so, how you feel justified in issuing it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sardar Swaran Singh
Home Minister
Government of East Punjab
Jullundur

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Ministry without Portfolio
New Delhi
28 February 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I have been informed that the East Punjab Government have issued orders that in future, in the recruitment of Services personnel, the Sikhs should get 40 per cent and all other communities 60 per cent. Not only has this been prescribed for initial recruitment but the communal proportions are to apply to promotions also. I am also told that the orders require that care should be taken not to promote an officer of a particular community if, by his promotion, the prescribed communal proportion will be disturbed.

2. I need hardly stress the mischief that these orders will cause. I have reason to believe that they have produced justifiable discontent amongst all classes of officers in East Punjab who do not belong to the Sikh community. I wonder if it is not possible for you to take action which will nip in the bud this objectionable expression of communalism in administration.

Yours sincerely,
N. Gopalaswami

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

176

Simla-E
20 March 1948

My dear Panditji,

I am extremely sorry for the delay in reply to your letter dated 1 March 1948. Preoccupation with the legislative work has caused this delay.

It is wrong to say that the East Punjab Government have issued orders that in future, in the recruitment of services personnel, the Sikhs should get 40 per cent and all other communities

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60 per cent. This proposal was put forward before the Government but no decision has yet been taken on this. Before the partition a 20:30 ratio was fixed for the Sikhs and the Hindus. On the same basis, as there are no Muslims now in some departments, instructions were issued that until otherwise decided recruitment should be on a 40:60 basis. When I came to know of it I issued instructions that this question should be thrashed out in the Cabinet and no final instructions are to be issued unless we decide about it. As the matter stands at present, no decision has yet been taken by the East Punjab Government on this question.

For your information I may add that we have recently admitted students to Rurkee Engineering College not on any communal basis but purely on merits. I propose to adopt the same attitude when the time for admission to other colleges arrives.

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

177

New Delhi
1 March 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter from the Governor of East Punjab together with a police report of a speech delivered by Sardar Udham Singh Nagoke on 15 November 1947, at Simla. You will observe that the speech as reported is of the worst possible kind. I think Udham Singh should be confronted with this report and asked to confirm it, deny it or correct it. A speech of this type can hardly be overlooked. I have suggested to Dr. Gopichand to do this.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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ENCLOSURE

Jullundur
27 February 1948

My dear Pandit Nehru,

While at Jullundur you asked me about a speech delivered by Udham Singh Nagoke on 15 November 1947, at Simla, and added that you had not yet received a report of that speech from the Provincial Government. I undertook to send you a copy of a police report of the speech. A copy is enclosed.

I understand that it is contended that the speech has not been reported correctly. I do not know whether it is worth while pursuing the matter. I am putting this point to Dr. Gopichand Bhargava and Sardar Swaran Singh with the suggestion that they should consider whether Udham Singh Nagoke should not be confronted with the report and asked to say whether he made the statements contained therein.

Yours sincerely,
C. M. Trivedi
[Governor of Punjab]

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

POLICE REPORT OF THE SPEECH BY UDHAM SINGH NAGOKE AT SIMLA

S. Udham Singh Nagoke, MLA, delivered a lengthy speech. He said that he was glad that he was delivering a speech when it was his own Government and that he had no fear of arrest. Referring to the communal disturbances in the Punjab, he criticised the Government for arresting young men who took part in the communal disturbances while nobody arrested him (the speaker) who was mainly responsible for having the Muslims killed and looted. He gave an instance that near his own village he exhorted the non-Muslim young men to kill the Muslims of the villages nearby and to take possession of their land and other property. He said that he gave them a promise that the Muslim property would be of the looters. On the arrival of the refugees, he said, the property was given to Hindu refugees by those young men at his request. He said that Sikhs were mainly responsible for saving the East Punjab from the Muslims. He blamed the British and the Muslims at length and said that they both joined hands and created trouble in India. He told the audience that complete independence would be achieved only when the British would also be killed. . . . He then highly criticised the act of police

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officials in connection with the search of "Baradari" Amritsar. He said that he was sorry that he was not there; otherwise not a single police official would have returned safely and rather they would have been killed by the Sikhs there. Condemning this act, he pointed out that such acts were not even done by the British.

Referring to the services in the Punjab, the speaker said that the public was so kind enough that they were keeping the same officials in the services who had been beating political workers. He then referred to a talk between Sardar Patel and himself at Amritsar. He said that Sardar Patel pointed out to him and to other Sikh leaders that when the Sikhs were in the East Punjab no army was needed. On this the speaker replied that no army was needed by the East Punjab Sikhs, but only arms and ammunition and that he would see that if these were given to the Sikhs the Sikhs would invade West Punjab and produce everything what they would get before Sardar Patel in Delhi. He told the audience that the Sikhs would only take rest when they would hoist their flag on Jamrod Fort, but for this, he said, lot of sacrifices were needed. He also said that the day was not far off when the Sikhs would march towards West Punjab to fetch their abducted mothers, sisters and daughters.

Concluding his speech, he said that no fifth columnist would be tolerated in India and the Sikhs who had removed their "keshas" and shaven their beards would not be counted as Sikhs. He urged the audience to help the refugees at all cost.

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New Delhi
4 March 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 1 March 1948, regarding Sardar Udham Singh Nagoke's speech. I agree that it is very objectionable and that he should be confronted with its report. He will probably deny its correctness, but the matter is one which Dr. Gopichand should be able to tackle. The matter however seems to be an old one and hence its importance may not be so much.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
25 July 1948

My dear Gopichand,

Please see the enclosed copy of a letter which I have received. If what is stated is correct, Ch. [Chaudhri] Krishan Gopal Dutt has certainly committed an indiscretion for which he must answer. Criticising any action of the Central Government, unconnected with any provincial affair, and justifying it on the ground that he did so in his personal capacity, is incompatible with the ministerial responsibility he has assumed. Please let me know what the actual position is and what you propose doing about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Simla

ENCLOSURE

Jullundur City
20 July 1948

The Premier
East Punjab Government
Simla

Dear Sir,

Ch. Krishan Gopal Dutt, Finance Minister, delivered a public lecture on the evening of the 17th instant here. I was one of the audience. During his lecture the Finance Minister criticised the action of the public and the leaders in honouring the last Englishman in a right royal manner. Clearly he meant to criticise the action of the Indian Union Cabinet in giving Lord Mountbatten presents, holding receptions and civic addresses. Developing this point he said that the misery and unprecedented hardships experienced by the refugees were the result of the partition of this province, which was brought about by the Englishmen and that when he saw the last Englishman being so highly honoured in the face of these sufferings, his heart was shattered (Mera sina phata jata hai). This got him a resounding applause.

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After the lecture was over and he was sitting in his car, I approached him and pointed out to him that he had criticised the Members of the Union Cabinet and the leaders which as a Minister he had no right to. To this he replied that those were his personal views to which he had every right and he drove off. Next morning at 7-30 I tried to contact him in the hope that I should be able to clarify the whole position but he bluntly refused to see me for want of time. And this when he was going to no more than a public breakfast arranged in his honour by a dealer in sports. A similar question I learn was put to him there, when he is reported to have maintained his unfettered right to criticise the Union Government and its Premier saying that he has been doing so of late.

The question every common man wants to know is if it is open to a responsible Minister of State thus publicly to condemn the Government, of which he himself forms a part.

Yours faithfully,
B. C. Bhalla
Major, MBBS

Copy to
The Prime Minister, Union Government
New Delhi
The President, Indian National Congress
New Delhi
Home Minister & member, Parliamentary Sub-Committee

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TELEGRAM

Simla
11 August 1948

The Hon'ble Sardar Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

LUDHIANA CONGRESS COMMITTEE INVITING ABDULGHANI HABIBUR REHMAN ABDULGHAFFAR MRIDULABEHN FOR FIFTEENTH. IT MAY CREATE LAW AND ORDER PROBLEM UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. WIRE ADVICE.

GOPICHAND

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
13 August 1948

Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Premier
East Punjab
Simla

YOUR TELEGRAM OF THE ELEVENTH. HAVE SPOKEN TO GURMUKH SINGH MUSSAFIR WHO HAS UNDERTAKEN TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HIS MEN. JAWAHARLAL HAS SENT FOR PERSONS CONCERNED AND TOLD THEM NOT TO DO ANYTHING WHICH WOULD EMBARRASS YOU IN REGARD TO LAW AND ORDER POSITION.

VALLABHBHAI

182

Simla-E
16 August 1948

My dear Sardarji,

The non-Muslim members of the West Punjab Assembly were nominated members of the East Punjab Legislative Assembly. The Muslim members who have gone over to the West Punjab have resigned their seats. The vacancies are there and we are expected to fill those vacancies. I have approached the Governor to suspend the elections for the present but it will not be possible to postpone them indefinitely. There are no voters on this side except in Gurgaon or there may be a few in some other places. I want to seek your advice as to whether we should announce the elections after some time or will it be possible and advisable for the Governor-General to amend the Constitution and abolish their constituencies.

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
31 August 1948

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

Please refer to your letter dated 16 August 1948. Action is being taken to amend the Rules in order to suspend the elections for the present. That is what I gather from the Law Ministry to whom, I understand, you have already officially written.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Simla

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Simla-E
16 August 1948

My dear Sardarji,

When we started our operations in Kashmir State, some guerillas were recruited by the army and sent to the area. I think we should get some guerillas trained who might be of help to us in case there is an attack from the Pakistan side on East Punjab. We can get them trained in Patiala. The best guerilla organiser is in that State. He can train about 100 people immediately. The training as well as maintenance of each man will require something between Rs. 300 and Rs. 400. I do not think it advisable to approach the Defence Department in a regular form. Could we get that help from the Government of India? This matter, if discussed in a regular way, will not be accepted by the Defence Ministry; therefore, I do not propose to approach them directly. The East Punjab Government has not got sufficient funds to spend; therefore, I beg to approach for this help. I would require about Rs. 40,000 to begin with. They will be spent through the Government if so desired but in another name.

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
20 August 1948

My dear Gopichand,

Thank you for your letter dated 16 August 1948 regarding guerilla organisation.

I agree with you in regard to the desirability of having such an organisation, but I cannot see from which funds we can give you the necessary assistance. The amount is small, and I suggest that at least to start with, you would do it from some miscellaneous funds of your own.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Simla-E

186

New Delhi
11 October 1948

My dear Gopichand,

I have seen your letter dated 2 October 1948 addressed to Jawaharlal regarding Madhopur Canal Headworks [See enclosure]. I personally do not see that you gain any advantage by getting the land transferred to the East Punjab Government. Even if Kashmir goes over to Pakistan, which I regard most unlikely, they would challenge this transaction as being mala fide and entered into by an unauthorised Government, so that you shall be where you are. Even if things go against us, it is impossible as far as I can see that the part of Jammu in which the works are situated can go to Pakistan.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Simla

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ENCLOSURE

Simla-E

29 September / 2 October 1948

My dear Panditji,

I am enclosing herewith a plan showing the Madhopur Headworks which lie across the River Ravi and from which the Upper Bari Doab Canal, which irrigates the districts of Gurdaspur and Amritsar in East Punjab, takes off, together with areas contiguous to it. From a scrutiny of this plan it will be apparent that all the river training works on the right side of the River Ravi, together with the major portion of the weir proper, lie in Kashmir State. The accession of Kashmir to the Indian Dominion is provisional and is contingent upon a favourable outcome of the UNO Commission decision and the plebiscite that is proposed to be held under their auspices. It would, therefore, be incorrect to assume the permanent accession of Kashmir to the Indian Dominion and the East Punjab Government, therefore, must prepare for the most adverse outcome of the UNO Commission decision.

2. In the event of Kashmir having to change its political allegiance the safety of the Madhopur Headworks will be very seriously threatened. It will be possible with very little difficulty, for Pakistan, in the event of Kashmir becoming a part of Pakistan, to divert the waters of the Ravi River above our headworks and lead it away to their areas downstream. The result of this diversion will be catastrophic for the East Punjab as the districts of Gurdaspur to a large extent and Amritsar in entirety will lose the present source of irrigation. The agricultural population of this area will have to migrate and this will further aggravate our already unmanageable refugee problem.

3. To ensure that the East Punjab does not find itself placed in this unhappy position, it is very vital that a certain part of the territory of Kashmir State lying to the right of the River Ravi for some length upstream and downstream of the Madhopur Headworks should be in the complete possession de jure and de facto of the East Punjab. The area proposed to be acquired is also shown on the attached plan in red chalk, and measures about 4.66 square miles. It is requested that the Kashmir Government may please be approached and requested to agree to the transfer of this area as a matter of political expediency. The East Punjab Government would, however, agree to pay suitable compensation if desired.

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We have already had sad experience at Ferozepore and should prepare ourselves in advance to prevent an unbearable situation being created.

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

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Simla-2
6 November 1948

Dear Sardarji,

You perhaps remember that I mentioned to you that you should ask His Highness the Rajpramukh not to interfere in East Punjab politics. Panthic Darbar has been set up in our province with His Highness as its president, who also presides over public meetings. The Darbar is not a religious band. They dabble in politics and party propaganda is being carried on. This is creating bad blood and it is quite possible that somebody may say derogatory words to His Highness.

I am told that in one of the meetings at Ludhiana such a thing happened. I do not like that somebody should say anything derogatory to His Highness in this province. This party politics has reached such a climax that the atmosphere in the East Punjab has become surcharged. His Highness should be asked not to be a party to whatever our leaders here may say about the activities of Master Tara Singh or the other group in this fight for power. He is not only presiding at the meetings, but he gives them monetary help as well. In our Assembly Party meeting a resolution was moved to this effect. I told them that the party should not take up this question, but I promised that I would convey the feelings of the members to you. The Congress banned the Hindu Mahasabha and the Akali Party. The Panthic Darbar is also a political party. Therefore this group should also be brought on the same level as the Akali Party. No Congressman should be allowed to hold office in this group.

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
10 November 1948

My dear Dr. Gopichand,

Thank you for your letter dated 6 November 1948 about His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala. He is coming here this week and I shall take this opportunity of talking to him about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Simla-2

189

New Delhi
22 December 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Governor of the East Punjab has sent to Dr. Gopichand. Trivedi has sent this to me.

As a general principle Governors should not preside over Cabinet meetings. But I am sure that in East Punjab the Governor's presence has been helpful and will continue to be so. I hope therefore that Dr. Gopichand and his colleagues will invite him to come and preside. Obviously, in such a matter any practice followed should be by consent of the parties concerned.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

21 December 1948

My dear Premier,

On my return from tour yesterday, I have been shown a news-item in the Statesman, dated 16 December, about the Governor still presiding over the Cabinet. In case you have not seen it, I encolse a copy. As you know, I have always thought and have also stated to you and our other colleagues

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and also in my fortnightly letters to the Governor-General that the relations between my colleagues and myself here leave nothing to be desired in the matter of cordiality and that, in fact, we are pulling on as a happy team. I stated also in one of my letters to the Governor-General that there is no reservation between you and me, at least in administrative matters. Relying therefore on cordiality and frankness as the basis of our relationship, I will write to you, as I have always done, with frankness over this matter.

2. Under the Government of India Act, 1935, [as adapted by the India (Provisional Constitution) Order, 1947] the Governor is a constitutional Governor and he acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers. He has no discretionary powers, neither does he act in his individual judgment. I have made this position plain in public pronouncements, at Press conferences and in my speeches during tour. In this province, the Governor presides over Cabinet meetings because the old Rules of Business, which are still in force in the absence of new Rules of Business which have not yet been framed, provide that the Governor shall preside at all Cabinet meetings. I understand that a draft of new Rules of Business has been pending for some time, but the matter has not yet been brought before the Cabinet. I know that in other provinces, with the exception of Assam, Governors do not preside over meetings of the Cabinet, but in all these provinces new Rules of Business have been framed, and my recollection is that in Assam the Rules provide that the Governor may preside over Cabinet meetings. In this matter I am relying not so much on the existing rule as on the goodwill of yourself and your tacit, if not explicit, agreement to continue the existing practice. I need not describe here the role that I perform in Cabinet meetings. I have always made it clear that it is for our colleagues alone to make decisions because the responsibility for administration is theirs and not mine. I have tried to act as an adviser, consultant and sometimes a mediator. So long new Rules of Business are not framed, it is constitutional for the Governor to preside over Cabinet meetings, but as I have said before, I do not rely on the Rule. If you had at any time during the past given the slightest indication that the existing practice should be modified, I would of course have gladly agreed to that, but neither you nor any of our colleagues have breathed one word to me about it. Neither did I know that there was any criticism of the practice either on the part of some members of the Legislature or some sections of the public. It is for you to make up your mind and, if you feel that the Governor should not normally or at all preside over Cabinet meetings, you have only to tell me this and I will conform to your wishes. Since this question has been raised, you have decided to hold a Cabinet meeting at Ambala today. I would not have been able to attend this meeting in any case, since I returned from tour via Ambala only yesterday and did not then know that this meeting had been fixed. I feel, however, that it is best that I should not attend any Cabinet meetings in future until the whole question is decided between us, and I

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would be glad if on return to Simla you will be good enough to take the earliest opportunity of discussing the whole matter with me with complete frankness. I do not wish to cause the slightest embarrassment to you or any of our colleagues vis-a-vis the Legislature or the public. Our sole aim is and should continue to be the promotion of the welfare of our new province in every way possible.

3. Although the question of the Governor presiding over meetings of the sub-committees of the Cabinet has not been raised in the communication which is said to have been received by you from some members of the Legislature, it is I think desirable that this question should also be settled. We have several sub-committees of the Cabinet, e.g. Rehabilitation Sub-Committee, Capital Sub-Committee, Irrigation and Hydro-Electric Development Sub-Committee, Food Sub-Committee and the Emergency Committee on Law and Order and Security. Some of these sub-committees were constituted at your instance and some at mine, and I am presiding over these sub-committees at the express invitation of yourself and other colleagues. You will agree with me that these sub-committees have been extremely useful. We transact business informally and without disputations which are sometimes a feature of our Cabinet meetings. You have to make up your mind whether you wish me to withdraw from all or any of these sub-committees. I have tried my very best to be helpful to my colleagues in the transaction of business in these sub-committees. We have also taken quick decisions and have been able to implement many of them equally quickly, and I hope I have succeeded, to some extent at least, in my being helpful to my colleagues in the many difficult tasks that have confronted them.

4. Ever since this new province started on its career, it has been faced with difficulties even greater than those anticipated when the decision to partition the Punjab was taken. When Pandit Nehru asked me to continue on as a Governor in our Indian Union early in July 1947, he stated that there was a possibility of my transfer from Orissa. The decision to transfer me was taken towards the end of July, and in asking Mahtab, the Premier of Orissa, to agree to that Pandit Nehru said inter alia that the situation in East Punjab required an experienced and firm administrator who could give effective help in building up the new province. To me Pandit Nehru was good enough to write that "we feel your presence there as Governor will help greatly in steadying the situation and in organising the new province. It is a big job, but we feel you will tackle it satisfactorily." What has guided me in my work since I came here has been Pandit Nehru's conception of my duties. That conception I have regarded as my solemn and sacred directive, that conception has sustained me throughout the very difficult period that has faced us all and that conception has made me work ceaselessly for everything that pertains to the welfare of our new province. Governors of other provinces may be having a

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comparatively lighter task because the difficulties there have been nothing as compared to our troubles and trials. It is a great satisfaction to me that so far you and our other colleagues have not only allowed but encouraged me to work in the direction which our Prime Minister desired me to do, and I trust that I may have achieved some measure of success. We have now attained a great deal of stability, but the task of rebuilding this province is a long and arduous one, and whatever decision we may reach finally about the Governor presiding over Cabinet meetings or taking part in the deliberations of the various sub-committees of the Cabinet, it will be my earnest endeavour, so long as I am here, to carry out this task within any new limitations that may be decided upon.

5. The news-item in the Statesman also refers to another communication said to be received from many members of the Congress Assembly Party that Secretaries are in the habit of taking files direct to the Governor and discussing them with him before submitting them to the Ministers. This is a complete lie and is most unfair, not only to me, but to the Secretaries. I cannot remember Secretaries bringing me any file before submitting it to the Minister. If a Secretary had dared to do this, I myself would have choked him off because I know the Constitution as well as anybody else. As you know, although I was urged by some Secretaries, and you also at one time agreed, that I should fix a time to see Secretaries, I refused to do this. I send for Secretaries very occasionally, not to discuss files with them, but to keep myself in touch. Occasionally I also see Heads of Departments, but this is done with the knowledge and consent of yourself and our colleagues. It seems to me that in fairness, not only to myself, but the Secretaries, all of whom have worked devotedly for us, a statement should be issued denying the allegation.

6. The news-item in the Statesman has been followed by an article from the special correspondent of the Indian News Chronicle in its issue, dated 18 December. This was also brought to my notice yesterday. In case you have not seen it, I enclose a copy. Frankly, I have been greatly distressed by this mud-slinging, not only at me, but at my colleagues. The nature of the item in the Indian News Chronicle is such that I would request you to talk it over with me at the earliest opportunity on your return from tour. I was not aware that my tour in Ludhiana and Ferozepur districts had caused disapproval in ministerial circles. You and I met several times after I returned from tour from these districts and not a word had been said to me. I have worked from morn to dewy eve during tours. I need not have done so but for my sense of public duty as a public servant and Pandit Nehru's directive. My aim during these tours has been to rally support round our Government, to ease communal tension, to ask refugees to be patient and to make our people in general appreciate the difficulties of Government. In fact, I under-

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stand that it was as a result of my speech at Ludhiana asking the Press to forbear from exciting communal tension that the papers in Ludhiana decided to refrain from communal writings. In all this I have done nothing but what is due of me, but it is sad to think that the Governor should be made the subject of a public controversy. It is very essential from the point of view of the development of sound conventions that the Governor should not be the subject of public criticism. This has, however, happened unfortunately. The Governor, like other public servants, has no forum, either the Press or the platform, and he must therefore look to his colleagues to defend him and to vindicate him, and what is perhaps even more important, to ensure that he is not made the subject of a controversy.

7. I have written to you extremely frankly, and I have no doubt that when we discuss this matter you will be frank with me also.

Yours sincerely,
C. M. Trivedi

The Hon'ble Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Premier
East Punjab

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Camp Pilani
23 December 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 22 December 1948 regarding correspondence between the Governor of East Punjab and Dr. Gopichand.

2. There is no doubt that the present practice in the East Punjab of the Governor presiding over Cabinet meetings is opposed to constitutional provisions and practice. Even under the old regime we tried to fight against this practice of Governor presiding over the meetings of the Cabinet. We can hardly do otherwise under a free India.

3. This practice also compromises the position in the public eye of both the Governor and the Ministry. The Governor ceases to be above party or above Government. He becomes more closely associated with the position and acts of Government which inevitably results in public criticism of his person as well as his acts. This is what is happening in East Punjab today. In fact, the whole question has been brought prominently before the public on account of the news item in the Statesman. On the other hand, the

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Ministry is twitted for being under the thumb of the Governor, even though in actual practice they may merely be following the Governor's advice at the Cabinet meetings and the Governor has no overriding powers.

4. Ordinarily, we could have let sleeping dogs lie and the present practice could have gone on, but the opposition both in the Assembly and within the Party, of which you are no doubt fully aware, is making capital out of the situation and is stirring up discontent on that account.

5. Nevertheless, I am writing to Dr. Gopichand to let me know what he proposes to do. On hearing from him, I shall write to you again.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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CHAPTER VII

UP'S HOUSING PROBLEM

191

New Delhi
3 August 1948

My dear Baldev Singh,

Lal Bahadur Shastri,[1] Home Minister of UP, saw me on 1 August in regard to the disposition of his police battalions and the accommodation required for them.

They have now 15 battalions of the Special Armed Constabulary located in Saharanpur, Moradabad, Lucknow, Allahabad, Benares, Meerut, Fatehgarh, Bareilly, Lansdowne, Agra and Sitapur. Of these, it is proposed to make over to the Army one battalion from Allahabad, another from Cawnpore [now Kanpur] and a third one of Agra in replacement of the Special Armed Constabulary battalions recently disbanded. This would leave 12 battalions with the UP Government. As you know, these battalions are fully equipped, their state of discipline is satisfactory and they could easily look after internal security in the areas in which they are posted. To that extent, therefore, it may be possible for you to redispose your troops in order that they may be placed where they may be more useful.

Most of these battalions are housed in military barracks which were lent to the UP Government temporarily. It appears, however, that the Area Commander has told the IGP of UP that his commitments were so numerous that he might have to ask the UP Government to vacate some of the army buildings now in their occupation. He particularly mentioned the buildings at Bareilly, Fatehgarh, Meerut, Allahabad and Benares. The UP Government are naturally considerably embarrassed. Accommodation for such a large force cannot be found overnight, and

1 Started life as social worker of Servants of the People Society founded by Lala Lajpat Rai; Minister for Police in Pant Cabinet in UP, 1946; General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1951; joined Nehru Cabinet in 1952; and successively became Minister for Railways, Communications, Commerce and Industry and Home; Prime Minister in June 1964; died in Tashkent, January 10, 1966

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even if it could be, it would involve the UP Government into very considerable outlay. The Home Minister was naturally perturbed over this development, and has sought my assistance in securing that the possession of these barracks is not disturbed. I hope it will be possible for you to give the UP Government this assurance. I should be grateful for an early reply.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh
Defence Minister
New Delhi

192

New Delhi
4 August 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Kindly refer to your letter dated 3 August about accommodation in UP for the provincial Government. We have made surplus accommodation available to the UP Government and to other provinces on the express condition that if the accommodation is required by our troops it would be given back at short notice. I have seen a tendency on the part of the provinces to readily agree to this condition when they take over the accommodation, but when we want it back they put forward all kinds of difficulties. There is no intention that provincial Governments should be asked to vacate military barracks when we do not want them for the troops, but you will appreciate that when our troops need them, they must have them back. This position has been made abundantly clear to the provincial Governments but as regards the present reference about the UP, I am making enquiries and will write to you again.

Yours sincerely,
Baldev Singh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
14 September 1948

Dear Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri,

When you saw Sardar Patel on 1 August last, you raised with him the question of accommodation at present occupied by Provincial Armed Constabulary battalions. The Defence Ministry have no objection to the Provincial Armed Constabulary battalions continuing in their present accommodation occupied by them at Saharanpur, Moradabad, Meerut, Bareilly, Lansdowne, Agra, Sitapur and Benares. At Allahabad, the battalion is accommodated in Bryant Lines in lieu of the accommodation which they used to occupy before. I hope that arrangement is satisfactory. At Lucknow, the battalion can continue in their present accommodation for the present, but the accommodation in Fatehgarh is required for a militia battalion which is being raised and for which a very large influx of recruits is being received at the Rajput Regimental Centre. The Defence Ministry have considered this question sympathetically, but find no alternative except to request the UP Government to find some other accommodation for their Special Armed Constabulary at Fatehgarh. Sardar hopes it will be possible, without much inconvenience, to accommodate the Ministry of Defence to this small extent.

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar

The Hon'ble Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri
Home Minister
Government of the United Provinces
Lucknow

194

New Delhi
9 October 1948

My dear Pantji,

I am sending herewith copy of a letter which I have received from Gopalaswami, Minister for Transport and Railways. If the story disclosed by the correspondence forwarded by him is

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true, the whole incident is deplorable. I have some doubts partly on account of the letterhead quoted therein and partly on account of confusion of offices which the gentleman, who wanted to benefit the Congress in his own way, is reported to hold. I shall be grateful if you will kindly have an immediate enquiry made into this matter and let me know the result.

2. Shankar tells me that you have gone to Nainital. I am, therefore, sending this letter to you there. I hope your health is better.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant[1]
Nainital

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
8 October 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I enclose copies of a letter from the General Manager, GIP Railway, to the Chief Secretary to the UP Government and of its enclosures.

I am drawing your attention to the contents of the enclosures to the General Manager's letter because I think you alone can pull up effectively Congress workers who behave in a manner calculated to bring that great organisation into contempt. I think the Congress High Command should take severe action against those connected with the organisation behaving in the manner indicated in the papers I send you. The Congress certainly does not stand in need of financial support obtained in this very irregular way, and its fair name should not be allowed to be exploited by individuals for obtaining even legitimate concessions by corrupt methods.

Yours sincerely,
N. Gopalaswami

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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1 Member, AICC, 1916 and UP Legislative Council, 1923; member, Congress Working Committee, from 1931; General Secretary, All India Parliamentary Board, 1934; elected MLA (Central), 1934 and Deputy Leader of Congress party; Premier of UP, 1937-39; member, Central Parliamentary Board and Chairman, UP Parliamentary Board; Chief Minister, UP, April 1946-January 1955; Home Minister, Government of India and Deputy Leader, Congress Parliamentary party, till his death on 7 March 1961

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LETTER DATED 29 SEPTEMBER 1948 FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER, GIP RAILWAY, BOMBAY, TO THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT, UP, LUCKNOW

I have been receiving complaints that attempts are made by local people in the Jhansi area, who pose as Congress workers or leaders, to bring pressure to bear upon the Divisional Traffic Manager, GIP Railway, Jhansi, with a view to obtaining irregular bookings of their or their friends' goods.

I enclose, in original, a letter 13 July 1948, together with its enclosure in original, addressed to the Divisional Traffic Manager, GIP Railway, Jhansi, by one Mr. S. M. Raipuri, who has styled himself as "P. Secretary, UP Congress Committee, Lucknow." The letterhead, which is fairly imposing, is of the "Director-General, AISSPM (Vindhya Prant)", and the address of the writer is given as C/o Jagran, Jhansi. Jagran, as you are aware, is a daily paper published at Jhansi.

You will, no doubt, agree that such interference and pressure from anywhere is extremely undesirable, and I have thought it fit to bring this case to your personal notice. It is hoped that the UP Government, or the provincial Congress authorities, will kindly take suitable notice of this state of affairs.

I shall be obliged if you will kindly let me hear on this subject in due course.

Yours sincerely,
General Manager

AISSPM (Vindhya Prant)
Director-General

Managing Director—

To:- The DTM,
GIP Railway,
Jhansi

Dear Sir,

One Shivraj Maheshwari, Prop. of the firm of Shiv Bakash Balabaksh, Bhakhri, State Jodhpur (Marwar), wants my personal help to send one wagon leaves of tendu for bidi works from Chhawara station to Digana station.

I assured him as a Congress leading worker of India for this purpose. Please let me know immediately as soon as possible how and when this arrangement could be done by your office.

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An urgent reply with the permit for the said leaves (one wagon) is hoping to be favoured.

Yours most sincerely,
S. M. Raipuri
UP Congress Committee
Lucknow
13-7-48

195

New Delhi
9 October 1948

My dear Gopalaswami,

Thank you for your letter dated 8 October 1948. I have grave doubts about the information being correct, but I am writing to Pantji about it and will write to you again when I hear from him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
Minister for Transport and Railways
New Delhi

196

Lucknow
18 October 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Thanks for your letter of the 9th. I had gone to the hills for about a week and returned here only on the 16th. I had the opportunity of meeting Shankar here before going to Nainital. He was good enough to tell me all about the way things had been moving there. I had been looking forward to the Finance Ministers' conference originally fixed for 26th and 27th for meeting you. The dates have since been changed to 30th and 31st. I am not sure if you will be there then. I have an impression that you are likely to visit Bombay about that time. If there be any service for me kindly let me know. I shall try to contact you or Maniben on the telephone.

The note which Gopalaswami sent you was only a copy of the letter which the General Manager of the GIP Railway had sent

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to our Chief Secretary. It had come to my notice shortly after its arrival here. I had also occasion to speak to the General Manager about it here today. I am making necessary inquiries and will send you a detailed report later. There is enough, however, in the letter and its pretentious head note to indicate its true character. The writer has, so far as I am aware, nothing to do with the Congress organisation. He probably indulges in systematic fraud. In the letterhead there is a reference to Vindhya Prant and he is described as the Director-General. No complaint regarding any Congressman had reached here from any Railway authority before this. So far as this particular communication is concerned I think there was enough in it to indicate that the writer was not a genuine Congressman. The Divisional Traffic Manager or the General Manager should have referred the matter immediately to the District Magistrate or the Superintendent of Police for necessary action. I have advised the General Manager to handle such cases promptly without any loss of time in the prescribed manner in future. He seemed to agree with me.

I have also received your letter about the emergency recruitment scheme. I hope to be able to send you a detailed reply soon.

It is no longer warm here. Delhi too must be pleasant. I shall feel grateful if you will kindly take care of your health and not over-exert yourself.

Please give my greetings to Ben [Maniben] and to Dahyabhai [Sardar's son] if he is there.

Yours sincerely,
G. B. Pant

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

197

New Delhi
22 October 1948

My dear Gopalaswami,

Please refer to the correspondence resting with my letter dated 8 October 1948. I give below an extract of a letter which I have received from Pantji [See No. 196] on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar

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New Delhi
22 October 1948

My dear Pantji,

Thank you for your letter of 18 October 1948.

I am sorry I shall miss you when you come here. I was looking forward to meeting you. However, we shall be meeting again during the Constituent Assembly session.

I myself felt that the letter which the General Manager of the GIP Railway has sent to Gopalaswami was suspicious-looking. I am informing Gopalaswami about the contents of your letter.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Lucknow

199

Bombay
29 October 1948

My dear Pantji,

I have received the attached telegram from Syed Raza Ali, who was formerly India's High Commissioner in South Africa, and on return joined the Muslim League. It is quite likely he left India on account of communal disturbances and has now returned, finding things quite safe. Whatever the position may be in regard to these, the allegations which he has made require looking into. Please let me know what the position is.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Lucknow

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ENCLOSURE

TELEGRAM

Moradabad
26 October 1948

H. E. Rajagopalachari
Governor-General
New Delhi

Hon'ble Shri Patel
Deputy Prime Minister, New Delhi

HAD TO PROCEED LAHORE FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT NOVEMBER 1947. CONTINUED ILLNESS CAUSED PROLONGED STAY IN PAKISTAN AS DOCTORS CONSIDERED ME TOO WEAK TO UNDERTAKE JOURNEY HOME. RETURNED TO MORADABAD FIFTH SEPTEMBER TO FIND MY RESIDENTIAL HOUSE RAZA LODGE REQUISITIONED BY GOVERNMENT WITHOUT GIVING ME NOTICE AND ACCESS TO IT DENIED DEPRIVING ME EVEN OF WARM CLOTHING AND BANK CHEQUE BOOKS. DIFFICULTIES RAISED IN MY TAKING POSSESSION OF MOVABLE PROPERTY HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS AND FURNITURE. TWO BUNGALOWS AMOUNTING ALMOST TO DACOITIES. . . . MOVABLE PROPERTY WORTH SEVERAL THOUSAND RUPEES STOLEN FROM MY HOUSE RAZA LODGE WHERE SOME SIXTY STUDENTS OF NEWLY STARTED TELEGRAPH SCHOOL RESIDING. TWO ROOMS . . . ALLOTTED TEMPORARILY TO ME [to] STORE MY THINGS. . . . LOCAL AUTHORITIES NOT FINDING THEMSELVES EQUAL TO PROTECT MY PROPERTY. SECOND THEFT OR DACOITY COMMITTED NIGHT BEFORE LAST NOTWITHSTANDING POLICE GUARD. I STRONGLY SUSPECT STUDENTS. I AM CITIZEN OF INDIAN UNION FROM WHICH I DID NOT WANT TO EMIGRATE BUT IF GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IS TO TURN WESTERN UNITED PROVINCES INTO PURELY NON-MUSLIM AREA I MUST TAKE LEAVE OF DEAR ROHILKHAND WHERE MY ANCESTORS LIVED FOR THREE CENTURIES. I WONDER IF THIS IS MY REWARD FOR ABSTAINING FROM PARTICIPATION IN FANNING HATRED FLAMES BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND HINDUS.

RAZA ALI, FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR INDIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Lucknow
10 November 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I was interested to receive your letter of 29 October regarding Syed Raza Ali. He had written to me as long ago as September last and even then I had ordered that consistently with public interest I would like to accommodate Syed Raza Ali and had directed the Collector to set apart necessary accommodation for him and allot the rest to others. Syed Raza Ali was also informed of these orders. He was thankful to Government and did not press any representation against the requisition. He wanted three rooms to be placed at his disposal and this was done. He also orally informed the Collector that he wanted his effects to be disposed of and, as soon as this was done, he would himself place the whole building at the Collector's disposal. For this he was given all necessary facilities by the Collector. The building was requisitioned for accommodating ex-military and refugee trainees. On 27 October, I received a telegram from him similar to that he sent you. This was acknowledged and telegraphic enquiries were made from the District Magistrate regarding the alleged burglaries or dacoities. The detailed report has not yet been received, but telephonic enquiries made from the District Magistrate disclose that, to say the least, the allegations are grossly exaggerated. Two reports of alleged burglaries were made. It was alleged that entry had been effected through a ventilator, but on inspection the Superintendent of Police found that the cobwebs of the ventilator, through which the alleged burglars had effected their entry, were intact. The entry must have been effected in some mysterious manner! As regards the loss of property, the authorities did not find any heavy loss as is now alleged. The so-called lost property, if in fact it was lost, was of a very small value.

As regards the complaint that Syed Raza Ali was deprived of his movable property including warm clothing etc., the District Magistrate said that when the house was requisitioned, he was getting a complete list of all the property prepared, but Syed

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Raza Ali himself asked him not to take the trouble and took over all his property.

Yours sincerely,
G. B. Pant

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

PS.

Detailed report has since been received and a copy has been attached.

ENCLOSURE

LETTER DATED 5-11-48, FROM SHRI K. L. MEHTA, COLLECTOR, MORADABAD, TO SHRI B. N. JHA, CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVT. UP, REGARDING THE ACQUISITION OF RAZA LODGE

Ref. : Home Secretary's signal dated 27 October 1948 and our conversation over the telephone this morning regarding the acquisition of Raza Lodge, I herewith send you my detailed report.

2. Sir Raza Ali left Moradabad for Pakistan soon after the attainment of our Independence. My predecessor wanted to acquire his house, known as Raza Lodge, in view of the tremendous shortage of housing accommodation in Moradabad. Sir Raza Ali, however, represented that he was a subject of India and had no intention of leaving Moradabad. He added that he would return to this town within a few weeks. The housing situation went from bad to worse and, on my arrival in the district, I learnt unofficially that Sir Raza Ali had no intention of returning to Moradabad. I, therefore, moved Government to permit me to take over Raza Lodge and proceeded to requisition it after receiving their approval.

3. Sir Raza Ali arrived in Moradabad to represent against my order which had become absolute by then, and the delivery of the house had, in fact, been given to Shri Goel, Principal of the Training Institute, for housing his trainees. I carefully considered his representation and rejected it. He, however, requested me to stay further proceedings until he had had time to represent the case to the Hon'ble Premier. I allowed his request. Sir Raza Ali then met me in Rampur in the residence of the Chief Minister on 23 September last. He informed me that he had given further consideration to the matter and had decided that it would be best for him to migrate to Pakistan. He said that he did not propose to press the representation to the higher authorities, and he also did not see any need to complete an inventory of his household effects which was being made by Shri Hari Krishna, a Special Magistrate of Moradabad, under my instructions. I saw to it that every facility was given to Sir Raza Ali in the matter of taking over the possession of his movables.

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I let him have a large room in the house, in addition to the one which was being occupied by his movables, to enable him to effect the change-over and also made arrangements for his stay at the PWD Inspection House. Sir Raza Ali had no complaints to make except against Shri Goel in regard to one or two minor incidents. Indeed, he came to me and expressed his appreciation for the courtesy and help which the district authorities were extending to him from time to time. Shri Goel was also only at fault to the extent that as 'Sapurdar' of Sir Raza Ali's movables, he was trying to be unnecessarily technical. He was duly pulled up by me.

4. Sir Raza Ali and his son Shri Hamza Ali, who is employed as a Dy. Director of Industries in Karachi, made an alarming report in a letter regarding what they called burglary-cum-dacoity in Raza Lodge, alleging that property worth several thousands of rupees had been removed from Raza Lodge. A case was immediately registered and investigation taken in hand. The S. P. visited the place of occurrence. Sir Raza Ali himself admitted to the investigating officer subsequently that only two tea-sets costing about Rs. 250 had been stolen from an almirah. The S. P. had pointed out that even after a minute examination he could not determine as to how any one could possibly have effected an entry inside the room. Sir Raza Ali had deputed two of his servants on watch and ward duty, but after this incident the S.P. deputed one H.C. and two constables to watch Sir Raza Ali's house during the night. Sir Raza Ali saw me after this occurrence but did not mention anything about it until I myself asked some questions to him. This clearly showed the importance he was attaching to this incident. We deputed one Naib Tehr., one reserved Sub-Inspector, one Under-Officer and six constables to look after Sir Raza Ali's property during the auction which took place on the 24th last. Most of the movables are said to have been sold at the auction. The left-overs were stored again in a room in Raza Lodge. The two constables, who proceeded to guard the house of Sir Raza Ali between 24/25-10-48 withdrew when Shri Hamza Ali told them that there was no longer any need to guard the house. Sir Raza Ali, however, again made a report of theft of 11 carpets costing about Rs. 600 on the 25th, alleging that these had been stolen from inside the locked room. A case was again registered and investigation promptly taken up. Here again, it could not be ascertained as to how the entry could have been effected by burglars inside the room. It was suggested that the burglars had entered the room from a skylight window. Its examination, however, revealed that the cobwebs were still intact at various places of the skylight, and there were no foot-marks or any other marks on the dust collected on the window, showing that no entry could possibly have been made through it.

5. The investigating officer is of the opinion that there is doubt about the genuineness of these cases. In any case, there is no doubt whatever that the reports had been grossly exaggerated. Rumour has it that Sir Raza Ali is

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merely preparing ground to take up this matter through the Pakistan Government in an effort not only to discredit this Government but also to extract some compensation. Sir Raza Ali seems to have misconstrued the courtesy shown to him and the facilities extended to him as a sign of weakness. He has also removed two ceiling fans and threatened to remove the remaining five ceiling fans and the engine fixed in his well. The Government Pleader is of the opinion that Sir Raza Ali was not entitled to remove the fans which, according to him, are appurtenant to the house. This point is further being examined and necessary action will be taken in due course. It may be necessary to move the civil court in the matter.

6. Sir Raza Ali has also sold and actually got eight or nine trees removed from the nazul plot. His men were in the process of cutting one more tree and removing another when the City Magistrate reached the spot and persuaded them to desist until the position had been clarified. The plot on which the trees were standing is entered as 'nazul' under the management of the Municipal Board in the papers. There is nothing to show that this plot was leased out to Sir Raza Ali. Sir Raza had not been able to show the lease or any other document in support of his contention that the plot was leased out to him. This matter is also under examination, and the Government Pleader's tentative opinion is that Sir Raza Ali has committed the theft. I shall ask him to draw up a complaint against Sir Raza Ali if he sticks to his opinion, but this will not actually be lodged until I have sent a further report to you on this point to seek your approval.

201

New Delhi
28 November 1948

Dear Dr. Zakir Husain,[1]

With reference to our conversation some time ago regarding your brother Dr. Yousuf Husain, I am glad to inform you that orders have now been issued to cancel the suspension order and to allow him to resume his duties in the Osmania University.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Zakir Husain
Principal
Jamia Milia Islamia
Delhi

[1] Educationist; co-founder of Wardha Scheme of Education; Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Milia (1926-53); Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University; Governor of Bihar, 1957-62; Vice-President of Indian Union, 1962-67; President of Indian Union, 1967; died May 1969

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CHAPTER VIII

REFUGEE REHABILITATION

202

New Delhi
12 January 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

As you know, it has become necessary to make adequate arrangements for large-scale evacuation of non-Muslims from Sind. I think the situation in Sind is somewhat better but there can be no doubt that a wholesale exodus will take place. We are dealing with the Pakistan Government about removing the embargo on shipping and rescinding ordinances which come in the way of evacuation.

It is clear that people from Sind can be evacuated easily only by sea. This means they are going to Bombay or Kathiawar. Liaquat Ali Khan[1] was specially afraid of Muslims from Kathiawar going to Karachi.

The Bombay Government are anxious to prevent any further refugees reaching Bombay, but there is no help for it, and I am requesting [B. G.] Kher to make arrangements for the reception of these refugees and their subsequent dispersal. We shall of course help the Bombay Government in every way.

Our High Commissioner in Karachi suggests that the Kathiawar States might also be requested to receive refugees from Sind. I think this might be done. If you agree, could you kindly communicate with them?

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

[1] Landlord of UP; member of provincial legislature, 1926-39; MLA (Central), 1941 and Deputy Leader of Muslim League; Finance Minister in Interim Government formed by Nehru in 1946; Prime Minister of Pakistan after partition; assassinated on 16 October 1951

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New Delhi
14 January 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 12 January 1948, regarding evacuation of non-Muslims from Sind. I have already written a letter to Kher myself and will speak to him and other Ministers during my forthcoming visit to Bombay. I shall also take up the question of arrangements for the reception of these refugees in Kathiawar States.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

204

Damodar Mahal
New Town
Karachi
12 January 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Enclosed is a letter from Dr. Popatlal A. Bhopatkar.[1] He is one of the victims of the recent wholesale looting of Hindu shops and houses that took place in Karachi. Thirty-five years back, after taking his MBBS from Bombay, he settled down in Karachi as a medical practitioner. He built up a very large practice and has been one of the most prominent medical men of the town, with an income running into some thousands per month.

Dr. Popatlal has been a great public man with a high reputation. Besides being a very active municipal councillor and leader of the Congress Municipal party for many years, he has been a member of the Sind Legislative Assembly and the Secretary of the Congress party there. Like all other Congressmen, he has had to do long periods in jail as well. His public spirit made

[1] Prominent Congress leader of Poona

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him the most popular physician, and his house was always surrounded by a large number of patients.

In these circumstances, it was rather surprising how even he was not spared. On 6 January, the day of the murder and loot, his house was entered into by a mob which deprived him of everything he possessed, including his car, his cash, his furniture, his wife's jewellery, his clothes etc. He was just sent out of his house alone with stab wounds and has taken shelter with a friend.

Dr. Popatlal has been a very good friend to me since I came here and has been most helpful in every possible way. I feel hurt at his misfortune and should like to be of any help that I can to him. I shall be glad indeed if you could give him your advice and guidance in his plight.

As letters are likely to be censored, I am sending you his letter in the diplomatic bag. He will be anxiously awaiting a reply which may kindly be sent in the same way. I shall keep in touch with him and shall hand him over your letter as soon as it arrives. He is most anxious to move on to Bombay as his position here is very irksome. I am writing to Mr. Kher, but a word from you would naturally carry much weight.

Hoping all is well,

I am,
With respectful regards,
Yours sincerely,
Sri Prakasa[1]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

C/o Babu Sri Prakasa
High Commissioner for India in Pakistan
Karachi
12 January 1948

My dear Bapu,

In the midst of your multifarious and strenuous work, compelling pressure of my sorrowful story has forced me to write this letter and tax your time.

[1] Educationist, journalist and politician; member, AICC, 1918-45; Secretary, UPCC, 1928-34; General Secretary, Congress, 1929-31; MLA (Central), 1934 and 1945; member, CA, 1946; High Commissioner in Pakistan, 1947-49; Commerce Minister in Nehru Cabinet; successively Governor of Assam, Madras and Bombay

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I trust and pray you will kindly spare some time to lend me your helping hand and guidance in this hour of my peril.

On Tuesday 6th instant at 4 p.m., a Muslim mob numbering more than 150 entered my bungalow and robbed us of everything that we had, all furniture, jewellery, silverware, clothes, utensils, etc. etc., inflicted wounds on the neck of my wife to remove ornaments and also wound on my forehead causing profuse bleeding. These rioters also smashed into pieces all the contents of my dispensary and also removed my motor car. In short, I am dispossessed of everything I and all the members of my family had, and driven out of our bungalow to take shelter at the house of a neighbour friend. So to say we are "refugees" in the real sense without a pice in our pocket and garment to cover us.

Bewildered under this catastrophe and knowing not how to plan our future, I am anxious to avail of your advice and guidance at this dire hour of my life and intend to come there as soon as passage by air is available.

My wound is now better and I am able to move out and await your early reply care of the High Commissioner for India in Pakistan.

With loving regards,

Yours sincerely,
Popatlal A. B.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

205

Bombay
20 January 1948

My dear Sri Prakasa,

Thank you for your letter dated 12 January 1948 which I have received here after it was redirected from Delhi.

I am sending herewith a letter for Dr. Popatlal, which please hand over to him. If he needs any assistance or help, you will, I am sure, do so.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Sri Prakasa
High Commissioner for India in Pakistan
Karachi

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ENCLOSURE

Bombay
20 January 1948

My dear Dr. Popatlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 12 January 1948.

The heart-rending story which you have told in your letter has deeply affected me. I feel it is no use your continuing to remain in Sind longer. I have spoken to Balasaheb and when you come here, we shall be able to do something. I have held the view that it would be impossible for the Hindus and Sikhs in Sind to remain there. Subsequent events have justified the view I took. It would be time to think of what you should do when you come here.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Popatlal A. B.
C/o Shri Sri Prakasa
Karachi

206

New Delhi
3 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter from Lady Mountbatten. I think it is very good of the Mountbattens to make this offer and we should accept it. It would be better for the accommodation offered to be used by government personnel rather than refugees. Perhaps your Ministry could look into this matter and make suggestions or Gadgil might do it. I am sending copies of this letter to Gadgil and Neogy.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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ENCLOSURE

Government House
New Delhi
3 February 1948

My dear Prime Minister,

In view of the present serious house shortage in Delhi, we would like to offer the major part of the south east wing at Government House either for government personnel or refugees. This would be self-contained and would consist of the following:

1. The whole of the second floor consisting of 8 bedrooms, each with a bathroom attached. One of these rooms is considerably larger than the others and, if necessary, could be used as a sitting or dining room.
2. The first floor (except for one room) consisting of 5 bedrooms each with a bathroom attached, a large room suitable as a sitting or dining room, a service room and a cloakroom with basins, etc.
3. Basement—Two rooms separated by a lobby, which could be used as a scullery and larder.

All the rooms would be furnished. There would be two beds in each of the bedrooms, making 26 beds in all. Electric fittings, i.e., ceiling lights and ceiling fans would be provided in each room, but there would be no table fans.

I am assuming that the government personnel or refugees would provide their own bedding, linen, cutlery, silver, glass, crockery and kitchen utensils. Owing to the limited stock at Government House it will not be possible for us to supply these items.

I am afraid that owing to the large number of persons accommodated at Government House, we should probably not be able to spare any servants. As regards food, the refugees would make their own arrangements just like other residents in New Delhi. There will be 12 chulas in the kitchen, and two sinks in the scullery and a large room with wire-gauzed windows and doors for a larder.

Before the kitchen, scullery and larder could be used, the PWD would have to provide chulas, sinks and wire-gauze doors and windows. The Executive Engineer estimates that he would be able to have these filled within two or

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three weeks. There are passenger and service lifts, and a main and a servants' staircase leading from the basement up to the second floor.

As you will see from the preceding paragraphs, the rooms available can accommodate comfortably either 26 persons, with two beds in each room if the large sitting room on the first floor is kept as a common sitting-drawing room; if, however, it were decided to use the large bedroom on the second floor as a sitting or dining room this would leave 12 bed rooms accommodating a total of 24 persons. The rooms could, of course, hold an additional person if desired, although this would make them far less comfortable in the hot weather. I fear, also, Government House could not supply the necessary additional beds. We could provide small tents for the refugees' servants on the Estate.

Of course, we leave it entirely to you whether the accommodation in the south east wing is used for refugees or government personnel. There would be a number of minor details, such as entrances, passes, etc., which could easily be settled later. I should be very grateful if you could kindly let me know as soon as possible whether this accommodation will be acceptable, as I shall have to arrange to move some of the staff to the north end of the house, and further it will take the PWD between a fortnight and three weeks to get the basement rooms ready. You would probably wish to send some one round to view the accommodation, and we should be delighted to arrange this through the Comptroller.

Yours sincerely,
Edwina Mountbatten of Burma

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

207

New Delhi
4 February 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 3 February 1948 about the offer of accommodation by the Mountbattens in Government House. I agree with you that it is nice of them to have made this offer and that we should accept it with thanks; but I do not think it would be suitable to accommodate any refugees there. What we should aim at is to accommodate government personnel so that the accommodation at present occupied by them could be used for refugees. Indirectly, therefore, it could be said that the release of the accommodation by the Mountbattens has resulted

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in our giving more accommodation for refugees. This would, however, be for Gadgil and Neogy to fix up. I am sending a copy of this letter to them.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

208

New Delhi
9 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

The Education Ministry has been trying to absorb most of the refugee teachers from Pakistan areas, who were in Government service and who have now migrated to Delhi. Now, however, I find that a number of refugee teachers from certain Indian States, such as Bahawalpur, are coming to Delhi. These teachers were in State service in the States, but as rules stand at present, we cannot classify them as Government servants for the purposes of Government service here. My personal opinion is that these refugee teachers, who were in State service, should be accorded the same treatment as refugee teachers who were in Government service. Unless this is done, it will be difficult to absorb these State service teachers in Government institutions.

I should be glad to have your opinion as to how we should classify these refugee teachers from the Indian States which they have had to leave on account of communal disturbances.

Yours sincerely,
Abul Kalam Azad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

209

New Delhi
11 February 1948

My dear Maulana,

Thank you for your letter of 9 February 1948 regarding Bahawalpur State employees.

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The question which you have raised has been considered by me a number of times, but I have found it impossible to agree to the proposal made. The Transfer Bureau is intended exclusively for Government employees who had to flee from Pakistan, and have sought refuge here or who were formerly Government employees in Pakistan who opted for service in India. Apart from the fact that we have more than enough already, and it would be physically impossible to accept any more commitments from non-Government employees, once we open the door to outsiders there would be practically no reason whatsoever to exclude many other categories of employees, as for example, District Board and Port Trust employees. We have also felt that, while we do owe a moral responsibility to refugees in general, including Bahawalpur State employees and others whom I have mentioned above, Government owes a special obligation to take into service, as far as possible, former Government employees in Pakistan.

In the circumstances, I much regret it is not possible for me to agree that Bahawalpur State employees should be treated on a par with Government servants. I would have no objection, however, to their being considered after our commitments in regard to Government servants are fulfilled.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Minister for Education
New Delhi

210

New Delhi
25 February 1948

My dear Sardarji,

Abdul Rahman Khan, Deputy High Commissioner, Pakistan, has raised with me the question of resettlement of Alwar and Bharatpur Meos in their original homes. These persons whose number is variously estimated from 60 to 70 thousand—no exact census has been taken—are now supposed to be living with their relations in Nuh and Firozepur Jhirka Tehsils of Gurgaon district.

Strictly speaking, a Muslim evacuee from India who wishes to come back is entitled to restoration of his property, whether land

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or a house etc. I presume that the same principle would apply to States which have acceded to the Indian Union. However, this question of resettlement of Meos has definite political implications. We have two alternative courses before us. The first is to send the Alwar and Bharatpur Meos back to their homes and restore to them their lands and other possessions. The other is to settle them in Gurgaon district alongside their friends and relations on land evacuated by those who have gone away to Pakistan. Indeed Abdul Rahman has definitely mentioned to us the latter alternative.

I shall be glad of your advice on this matter.

Yours sincerely,
K. C. Neogy

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

211

New Delhi
27 February 1948

My dear Neogy,

Thank you for your demi-official letter dated 25 February 1948 about resettlement of Meos in their original homes.

Yesterday, I had a talk on this matter with Seth, Administrator of Alwar. It was from him that I learnt that Abdul Rahman Khan was to visit Alwar shortly. I feel that such a visit would be very undesirable. Abdul Rahman was formerly Army Minister in Alwar. For him to visit the former fields of his exploits would expose us to considerable difficulties. I should be grateful if you could do something about it. In any case I would have liked to be consulted before his visit to Alwar was agreed to.

As regards the question of resettlement, I am enclosing a copy of the monitored report of a broadcast from Pakistan. From this you can gather what Pakistan's policy in respect of resettlement of non-Muslims without displacing refugees is. I feel that the return of Meos to Alwar or Bharatpur would cause great bitterness and discontentment and might lead to serious breaches of the peace, particularly if it involved displacement of persons already settled on these lands. The Meos had started trouble in these two States and committed serious atrocities at the onset of the trouble. The memory of this is still fresh and people are extremely bitter about

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it. I am afraid, therefore, there is little chance of Meos being received in Alwar or Bharatpur with that degree of peace and security which would be essential for their rehabilitation or resettlement. I would, therefore, suggest that refugees who have already been allotted to Gurgaon but who can be absorbed there may be sent to the States, and Meos who are already in Gurgaon might be settled on the vacant lands in that district. I hope it will be possible for you to avoid creating any exclusively Muslim villages or belt of villages; otherwise, I am afraid, we shall again have similar trouble as in the past.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri K. C. Neogy
Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation

212

New Delhi
28 February 1948

My dear Sardarji,

Thank you for your letter of 27 February about resettlement of Meos in their original homes in Alwar and Bharatpur.

This is the first time I hear about Abdul Rahman Khan's proposed visit to Alwar. I do not know how this visit has been arranged and I do not see how I can stop it. I agree with you that Abdul Rahman Khan's visit to Alwar at this juncture or until the situation stabilises will be unfortunate.

As regards your advice that Alwar and Bharatpur Meos may be settled in Gurgaon so long as they do not make a solid belt, I am taking up the matter immediately with the East Punjab Government. I agree with you that the return of these Meos to their original homes for resettlement and rehabilitation is not feasible. You have suggested that the evacuee lands in Alwar and Bharatpur may be allotted to West Punjab refugees who were earmarked for resettlement on evacuee lands in Gurgaon. I had been thinking in terms of sending to Alwar and Bharatpur refugees from the NWFP, Bahawalpur and Baluchistan who are the direct responsibility of the Central Government, and if any land was left over, as well may be the case, it will be taken up by the overflow of West Punjab refugees who cannot be con-

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tained and resettled in East Punjab. I shall be glad of your advice on this aspect of the case.

Yours sincerely,
K. C. Neogy

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

213

New Delhi
3 March 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to Pattabhi [Sitaramayya].[1]

Sushila [Nayar][2] told me on the telephone that the work of recovery was proceeding well but a great majority of the women did not want to leave their new homes and this was a problem. I told her that an assurance could be given that they will not be sent away against their wishes to Pakistan, but it is desirable that they should come here first and then go back to Patiala after the whole matter has been finally settled here.

Sushila was anxious that these women should be removed from Patiala immediately as it was a strain to keep them there. I have written to Neogy and Lady Mountbatten on this subject.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

1 Congress leader of Andhra; joined party in 1916; member, AICC and Congress Working Committee; Congress President, Jaipur session, 1948-50; President, All-India States Peoples' Conference, 1936 and again 1946-48; member, CA, 1946-50; later Governor of MP

2 Gandhi's personal aide at Sevagram Ashram, Wardha; Minister and later Speaker of now defunct Delhi Legislative Assembly; Minister of Health under Nehru and Indira Gandhi

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ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
3 March 1948

My dear Pattabhi,

I have just had a telephone message from Sushila Nayar from Patiala. She has gone there to help in recovering abducted Muslim women. This is an urgent task which we are undertaking and we wish to complete it, if possible, within the next fortnight or so. We are having good results in these Punjab States, but she tells me that suddenly difficulties have arisen because of the Praja Mandal agitations in some of the Punjab States for responsible government. These agitations divert the attention of the police and the work of recovery of women is held up. This applies to Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot and Jind. In Patiala, things are quietening down but in other places they are not.

I do not exactly know what is happening in these places and what the Praja Mandal people intend doing. I would hesitate to advise without full knowledge, but there are two considerations which I should like to place before you. The first one is that it would be a pity to obstruct in any way our plan for the recovery of abducted women and girls. We are concentrating on this and hope to achieve substantial results in a very short time. If once this is upset or delayed, then it may be difficult to start afresh on the same scale. Indeed, in such matters delay creates new and almost insoluble problems. Therefore, I should have liked all our energies, including Praja Mandal energies, to be concentrated for two or three weeks on this recovery of women programme.

Secondly, it seems to me a little risky at the present juncture to start any agitation which may have a distracting effect as between Sikhs and Hindus in these States. The political agitation may well be converted into a communal conflict and the political issues will be hidden. It would not help us very much to say that the fault was someone else's. The result would be the same and our cause would suffer. Punjab, that is all parts of it, has been so rudely shaken up by the events of the past six months that every step has to be carefully considered. I should have personally thought that any direct action movement just at present was rather a risky adventure.

As I have said above, I do not know the facts and, therefore, I am not competent to advise. I feel, however, that in any event nothing should be done which would come in the way of our recovery of women programme.

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Also, that the steps taken by the States Peoples' Conference should fit in with the policy of the States Ministry; otherwise there would be confusion and some conflict in policies.

I am writing to you to draw your attention to these facts. I should like you to take such steps as you think proper. The matter is urgent so far as the recovery programme is concerned.

I had a long talk with the Maharaja of Patiala night before last and he complained bitterly of the activities of the Praja Mandal in Patiala which had enraged the Sikhs there; the result being bad and communal passions have been roused. I have heard only one side of the story, but I am worried at these developments.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya

214

New Delhi
4 March 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 3 March 1948. I am glad you have drawn Pattabhi's attention to the ill-timed agitation which has been stirred up in Patiala. I hope it has a steadying influence on him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

215

Government House
New Delhi
20 January 1948

My dear Deputy Prime Minister,

This is to introduce Lieutenant Colonel Hodgkinson, who was a member of the Military Emergency Staff in the Cabinet Map Room at Government House until its recent disbandment, and who was, at one time, in charge of my Film and Photographic Section in South-East Asia Command. He has mentioned to me

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two coloured feature films he is anxious to make—one on Delhi and the other on refugee and rehabilitation work—which he feels might be of interest to the Government of India. I have seen his outline plan and advised him to approach the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in the first instance. He has had considerable experience in the production of feature films for specialised audiences, and I think perhaps his proposals may be of interest to you.

Yours very sincerely,
Mountbatten of Burma

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

216

New Delhi
25 January 1948

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 January 1948 regarding Colonel Hodgkinson.

I should be glad to see him some time after my return from tour on the 27th. If you would kindly ask him to ring up my Secretary, he will fix a suitable time.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency the Earl Mountbatten of Burma
Governor-General of India
New Delhi

217

New Delhi
1 March 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to Aftab Rai[1] about the refugee lawyers from West Punjab and the Frontier. I think a number of them have very good qualifications and they might do useful work in some States. If you would like to have a list of these persons with their qualifications I can have it sent to you.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

[1] Director-General, Disposals, 1947; Chairman, Rehabilitation and Development Board, Government of India

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ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
1 March 1948

My dear Aftab Rai,

I have been repeatedly approached during the past few weeks by deputations of refugee lawyers who want some work to do and some gainful occupations. I have also examined a list of such lawyers with their qualifications. Some of them appear to be quite competent and suited for many types of employment. I am told that some kind of difficulty comes in the way of their employment, that is, others have priority over them and hence they get practically no chance at all. I think something should be done to get over this difficulty. How far this is the concern of your Board I do not know. I am, therefore, writing not only to you but to the Relief Ministry also. I hope that you will be able to do something about this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Aftab Rai
Chairman
Rehabilitation & Development Board
New Delhi

218

New Delhi
4 March 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 1 March 1948, regarding refugee lawyers from West Punjab and the Frontier.

I shall be glad if you kindly let me have a list. We could then see how many of them could be absorbed as opportunities occur.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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New Delhi
8 January 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a report which has been received from the Superintendent of Police, Delhi.

The refugee situation, particularly the accommodation problem, is becoming unmanageable. They seem to be giving us no peace, and it appears that we shall have to quicken our pace much more in dealing with the problems of both accommodation and rehabilitation.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

It is reliably understood that a meeting of the refugees was held on 1-1-48 evening in the office of Shama, Urdu weekly paper (Phatak Habash Khan, Delhi), in connection with the occupation of vacant Muslim houses situated in Phatak Habash Khan, in which the Muslim agents participated. It is the general practice of the Muslim agents here that they, after getting some money as a sort of 'pagri', have been allotting vacant Muslim houses, whether belonging to them or to those who had already left for Pakistan. It was decided in the meeting that their womenfolk should be sent in hundreds on the evening of 2-1-48 to the locality who should start occupying the vacant houses on the Muslim agents pointing out. On 2-1-48 this scheme could not be carried out on account of rain.

On 3-1-48 evening, refugee women arrived in Phatak Habash Khan according to their plan and the vacant houses were taken possession of by them. Their men were also with them who however followed later. I was present at Wavell Canteen along with D.S.P./C and S.H.O. Kotwali in connection with the arrangements for Mahatma Gandhi's arrival. On the information given by S.I. Amar Nath, I at once rushed to the spot along with D.S.P./C and S.H.O. Kotwali and controlled the situation with great difficulty as police had to deal with the women. Tear gas was also used. All the Muslim houses

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occupied by the refugees were got vacated. Police had to face great difficulty in getting the houses vacated as they were the target of sallies from women.

Maulana Hafiz-ur-Rahman and other leaders of the Jamiat-ul-Ulmai-Hind also arrived, and the situation was discussed with them complaining that this trouble had been created by Muslim agents with ulterior motives. Maulana Hafiz-ur-Rahman admitted it and asked Sadiq and Naqi, Special Magistrates working on behalf of the Jamiat-ul-Ulmai-Hind, to furnish a list of such agents. In spite of my repeated requests so far no lists have been supplied to me.

On 4-1-48 at about 9 a.m. again the refugees—men and women—assembled in Khari Baoli in front of the main gate Phatak Habash Khan in order to get entry in it for occupying the vacant houses. As there was suitable arrangement of the police they could not achieve their object. The number of women was about one hundred and thousands of men refugees were backing them. This lawlessness continued up to 2 p.m. Police applied all sorts of tactics to disperse the crowd but in vain. Anyhow tear gas had to be used to disperse them. ADM and City Magistrate both arrived at the spot and discussed the situation with me.

This lawlessness will never abate unless and until necessary arrangements are made for the allotment of the vacant houses. If this lawlessness continues, there is every possibility of a general flare-up in the city. Refugee men and women are very desperate and are bent upon occupying the vacant houses at any cost.

I, therefore, suggest that some suitable solution of the whole tangle in respect of these houses may be found out in order to ensure peace in the city. The situation is otherwise under control; 33 men who were found violent from among the refugees were arrested u/s 107/151 CrPC which had a salutary effect.

Superintendent of Police
City Delhi
4 January 1948

220

New Delhi
2 March 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

You will remember that we came to the conclusion two or three months ago that the areas in Delhi city which are now predominantly Muslim should for the present be reserved for Muslims. What exactly these areas are, it is perhaps a little difficult to define with accuracy and the local authorities will have to specify them.

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Later the conditions laid down by Bapu at the time of his fast also referred to this matter and we accepted these conditions. I believe that generally speaking this policy has been followed by the local authorities since then. I realise that this cannot be a permanent policy and some time or other we shall have to consider matters afresh. We cannot keep a large number of houses in Delhi vacant indefinitely. But for the present and for some time to come we must continue this policy both because we are pledged to it and because it is a right and soothing policy.

Our new Rehabilitation and Development Board will soon be coming out with some of their township schemes near Delhi. I suppose some time or other the East Punjab capital will also be announced. All these will make a difference and we may well reconsider the situation in the light of these developments.

The policy I have indicated above has been followed thus far, but I understand that no formal orders to this effect have been issued by the Home Ministry and the local authorities, therefore, have been functioning rather in the air. May I suggest that such orders might be sent to them to regularise their actions?

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

221

New Delhi
4 March 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 2 March 1948, regarding reservation of certain areas in the Delhi city for Muslims.

2. I am looking into the matter again but my own impression is that since the question referred to the reservation of vacant houses for Muslims, it was dealt with by the Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry and the execution of the Cabinet orders was also for them to take up. Actually the law and order aspect was only an incidental matter and was not directly involved. I doubt, therefore, if the Home Ministry would be concerned.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
15 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

You will be interested to see the enclosed report which I have received from IGP, Delhi. I have been seriously concerned about the return of Meos and other Muslims from Pakistan before we have completed the rehabilitation of our own refugees. I am seriously apprehensive of trouble in case this influx grows. I am afraid the proposed Delhi-Lahore train which is due to commence on 20 April 1948, will encourage this influx and aggravate the dimensions of the problem. For the present, owing to Bapu's death, feelings are subdued, but if on account of this influx any flare-up starts, it might become beyond our control. This is a very serious aspect of the whole matter and we must settle a definite policy having regard to all the circumstances of the case.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

223

New Delhi
26/28 June 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I had a talk with Jawaharlalji this morning. He said that it would not be possible to postpone the meeting of the Working Committee or to hold it at Dehra Dun at such a short notice, but we might take such items of the agenda as are more or less of administrative character, and no decision would be taken with regard to matters of policy and particularly with regard to questions which have been agitating the public mind. We would hold another meeting of the Working Committee a few days later when you would be here, say, about 12 July or so. I communicated this on phone at about 10 o'clock this morning.

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I think you misunderstood my last letter in one respect. I did not say that the question of Meos would be considered at the meeting of the Working Committee. I only conveyed to you what Vinobaji had said about the question, and that he had asked me to give the kind of assurance he suggested on behalf of the Congress. Anyhow, the matter will not be considered now even if some one raises it. In the meantime, there are certain developments of which I should inform you. Yesterday, there was a meeting which, I am told, was attended by the Prime Minister, Mohanlal Saxena,[1] Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Dr. Gopichand, Sardar Pratap Singh[2] and perhaps some officers of the Ministries concerned and Vinobaji, where the question of settling of Meos was discussed. I am informed that no final decision was taken and a small committee was appointed to collect information and report after a fortnight or so. In the meantime, the status quo was to be maintained which includes not disturbing those Meos who were already in Alwar. I am told that 20,000 of them went there some months ago and a number of them have been returned back but a few are still there. I met Vinobaji this morning and showed to him your letter. He said there were two things which required immediate action. The rainy season was approaching and unless lands were given to the Meos without delay this crop also would be lost and, therefore, the matter was of great urgency and required immediate action. He also said that the number of Meos who were forced out of Alwar and Bharatpur last year was very much larger than those who left Gurgaon and went to Pakistan. The land which they left behind was also very much larger in area than that left by the Meos who migrated to Pakistan. Some of the Meos of Alwar and Bharatpur went to Pakistan but a great bulk of them remained with their relations in Gurgaon. It would, therefore, not be possible to settle all the Alwar and Bharatpur Meos in Gurgaon and if they were all to be kept in one place, whether they belonged to the States or to Gurgaon, then one contiguous block could be a block covering part of Gurgaon and part of these States. But they would fall under two administrations, namely, the Punjab and the Matsya Union. Jawaharlalji

[1] Member, UP Legislative Assembly, 1935-45; President, UPCC, 1938-39; Secretary of Congress party in Parliament, 1947-49; Union Minister for Rehabilitation, 1948-50

[2] Educated in US where he joined Ghaddar party, which was working for India's liberation; joined Congress in 1930; MLA (Punjab), 1936; re-elected in 1946; member, CA, 1946; General Secretary, PCC, 1939-46; President, 1950-52; member, CWC, 1946-53; Minister, 1947-49, 1952-56; Chief Minister of Punjab, 1956-61; assassinated in 1965

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told me that the Administrator of Matsya Union did not like to have them, although the people there, particularly the Bania class, did not object to their going back. East Punjab also would like not to have them and, if possible, even to get rid of those who are still there. So there the matter stands.

Vinobaji gave me another information which I did not know. He said that more than 20,000 Meos are said to have been converted to Hinduism last year within the States. They were allowed to remain there with their houses and lands as they had become Hindus. They are still there, but now they say that they are Mussalmans and that their conversion was under coercion. I am told there is an agreement between the Indian and Pakistan Governments which was reached at the instance of the Government of India that no conversion made during the disturbed period should be recognised. So it seems a good number of Meos will be there, even if those who are now in Gurgaon are not sent back. In today's Hindustan Times, I see a report of the speech delivered by him [Vinoba] at the weekly prayer meeting at Rajghat.

When are you coming? We shall fix the Working Committee meeting according to your convenience, and hence it is necessary to know the probable date of your return. I understand that you may be back about the first week of July. In that case perhaps a date about 12 or 15 July might suit us for the Working Committee meeting.

Yours affectionately,
Rajendra Prasad

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1 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi
14 May 1948

My dear Sardar,

Many thanks for your letter dated 10 May. We have a meeting in Bombay in connection with the Indian National Trade Union Congress on the 16th and 17th. They have asked me to inaugurate it and so I am going there tomorrow. On my way back I propose to spend two or three days at Abu and reach Delhi on the night of the 20th or the morning of the 21st. I will reach Mussoorie on the 23rd at the latest so that we shall have at least one day before the conference meets. There are

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various other matters about which I would like to have a talk with you. Amongst these the situation in Delhi is one. The situation here is deteriorating very fast and people tell me that not only is the RSS reorganising itself—or rather coming out in the open once again because the organisation has never been disbanded—but that there is a whispering campaign going all round particularly among refugees that there may be trouble any time. Some incidents have already occurred. There was a stabbing case three days ago and a shooting incident day before yesterday. These are indications of the coming burst-up. Congress people here, one and all, complain against the local officials whom they charge with communal bias, particularly the Deputy Commissioner, the Chief Commissioner being more or less a non-entity. The Inspector-General of Police who tried to keep the balance has been transferred and his place is going to be taken by some one from the Punjab. The idea of all who complain is that the Punjabis have suffered much and are naturally bitter in their heart, and if in Delhi the situation has to be kept in control, the key positions should be occupied by people from outside the Punjab. They say that it may not be difficult to get officers of good repute from UP or from some other provinces, because Delhi is an all-India province and it can very well requisition the services of officers from any province the Government choose. I will speak to you more in detail about these things when we meet, but I have tried to pass on whatever information I have got so that you may be fully posted and take such steps as you consider necessary to control the situation.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

PS.

After the above was typed I have come to know some facts about the Delhi situation of which it is necessary to apprise you. Two or three days ago there was a conference of Socialists in Delhi in which very bitter speeches were delivered attacking the Government for not taking action against Hyderabad and also inciting the people at large against the Government. All this is said to have been done because of the Government's failure to deal with Hyderabad firmly. It has naturally its communal aspect and has succeeded in rousing passion. I am told they are having meetings all over the old city delivering such speeches. Some of

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the houses vacated by the Muslims which were not occupied till now have been occupied by Socialists or their nominees.

There is a persistent rumour that 15 June is fixed as a date for something big happening and panic is growing. It is feared that RSS might do something on that date. I am told that RSS people have a plan of creating trouble. They have got a number of men dressed as Muslims and looking like Muslims who are to create trouble with the Hindus by attacking them and thus inciting the Hindus. Similarly there will be some Hindus among them who will attack the Muslims and thus incite the Muslims. The result of this kind of trouble amongst the Hindus and Muslims will be to create a conflagration. The transfer of the IG who knows Delhi and is able to control the situation at such a critical juncture might itself complicate the situation, particularly because his successor will be new to the place and will be a Punjabi and, I am told, has not a good reputation in communal matters. I am passing all this information for what it is worth.

R. P.

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Mussoorie
18 May 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 14 May 1948. I hope it will be possible for you to come on the 22nd so that we can have at least two days in which to talk about things in general at some leisure. Please do try. If you cannot manage 22nd, then 23rd is indispensable.

I myself am very anxious about Delhi. I said long ago that our failure to do something substantial for the housing of refugees and the return of Muslims to Delhi, before the non-Muslim refugees are rehabilitated, are a great source of danger to the peace and security of Delhi. But for reasons with which you are already familiar we have made such a slow progress in the matter of rehabilitation of these refugees. On the other hand, the influx of Muslims from Pakistan is continuing on a fairly substantial scale and the feelings of sullenness, discontent and even hostility, both towards Muslims and Government, are, therefore, understandable; but, as far as I can see, the local administration is fully alive to the danger involved. I wanted to make a change in the local

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administration, but unfortunately, I am up against difficulties which I will explain to you when you come. As regards the Inspector-General of Police, the present incumbent is too junior for the post. He was DIG until about a month and a half ago. He was made IG temporarily only because the Director of the Intelligence Bureau, Mr. Sanjevi, found the combination of his job with that of Inspector-General of Police too much for him and the selected officer from the Punjab was not going to be available soon. On the ground of having officiated for this short period, therefore, Mehra could have no claim for IGP-ship. However, in deference to Jawaharlal's wishes, I agreed to his retention as IGP for a month or so, provided it caused no embarrassment to the East Punjab Government to whom we had virtually plied with a series of telegrams for early relief of Chaudhury, the selected officer. I understand that Chaudhury had already been relieved before our request for postponement reached the East Punjab Government, and the latter were not prepared to revise their order.

I have seen Chaudhury's record. It is much better than that of Mehra. He has been commended for ability, integrity, grit and determination. In three districts, to which he was posted, the police administration was in a mess, and he restored order out of chaos. Two of these districts were particularly heavy and strategic, viz. Mianwali and Ferozepore. I feel that it would be most unfair to condemn an officer with such reputation in advance of his joining duty.

As regards the RSS, both myself and the local administration have already initiated action to deal with them. The Socialists are, of course, adept at fishing in troubled waters. I sensed the danger from them long ago, but as an organisation we seem to have become alive to it only a few months back.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President, Indian National Congress
New Delhi

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New Delhi
23 June 1948

My dear Sardarji,

As you are aware, there are still a number of persons connected with the Hindu Mahasabha who have not been released. A number of them have been detained under the orders of the Delhi Administration. The case against Mahant Digbijoy Nath, Deshpande, Professor Ram Singh and others has resulted in a conviction. There was no charge against them for having made inflammatory speeches. The only charge was that they held a meeting in Delhi without the permission of the police. From the evidence it appears that they did apply for permission and some sort of conditional permission was granted. In any case, the offence became a highly technical one. The magistrate has released the president of the meeting and has convicted the other persons. An appeal is pending before the District Judge against this order. The Judge has directed that the accused may be released on bail. I am told that this order has been frustrated or is going to be frustrated by a decision of the Delhi Administration to detain them under the Public Security Act. Previously also, the East Punjab High Court ordered their release on bail but promptly the Delhi Administration detained them as security prisoners. I have nothing to say against Government doing anything in respect of persons against whom charges exist and the persons are informed what the charges are about. But the continued detention of persons without charges is not fair and desirable. This becomes all the more serious if orders for detention are issued only to frustrate orders made by courts directing the release of particular persons on bail. It has been urged that the presence of these persons in Delhi during Godse's trial is not desirable. If that be so, they may be advised to remain out of Delhi or at least not to have anything to do with the trial. In fact some persons who have been released are living completely aloof, and that is the advice which I have given them too.

There are some other people against whom no cases have been brought, but they are kept under continued detention. One of them is Ramnath Kalia, whom you perhaps know. He was

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appointed a Special Magistrate during the period of disturbances and he did most valuable work to serve the refugees. He was appointed a member of some important committees [set up] by Government. His detention has not been withdrawn. When the East Punjab Chief Justice made some strong comments about his detention, he has been temporarily released on bail. I shall feel grateful if you will kindly ask the Home Secretary to have these cases examined so that the present sense of frustration and continued injustice may not deepen. I have nothing to say if Government proposes to take action against persons in respect of whom definite charges exist and the persons concerned are given an opportunity to answer those charges. I am sorry to trouble you about this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

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New Delhi
10 July 1948

My dear Syama Prasad,

Thank you for your letter of 23 June. The whole question of our policy regarding detenus is going to be discussed at a meeting of the Premiers which I have called on the 17th. In the meantime, I note your views on the subject.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Minister for Industry and Supply
New Delhi

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New Delhi
29 July 1948

My dear Sardarji,

The monthly meeting of the Joint Rehabilitation Board will be held tomorrow in my room commencing at 10 a.m. The agenda includes the question of the resettlement of Meos and I propose to take this up as the first item for consideration.

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2. A copy of the report of the Fact-Finding Committee, appointed at the last meeting of the Board, has been sent to the States Ministry and you must have seen it already.

3. The Prime Minister is attending the meeting for participating in discussion of this subject. May I request you also to be present? If, however, you find it inconvenient to do so, it would help us very much if you could let us have your views on the question with reference to the Fact-Finding Committee's report, so that the Board may arrive at a decision after having the benefit of your advice.

Yours sincerely,
N. Gopalaswami

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
29 September 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Sucheta Kripalani[1] came to see me this evening and gave me an account of the relief work in Calcutta. She told me that about 1,000 refugees from East Bengal were still coming in daily. This was chiefly due to the bad economic conditions in East Bengal.

The account she gave me about relief work by Government or others in West Bengal showed that this work was not being carried on very satisfactorily. Money doles were given and very little attempt had been made to make the refugees . . . do work of any kind. I am writing to Dr. B. C. Roy about it.

Dr. Prafulla Ghosh has now formed a relief committee as a branch of the Congress Central Relief Committee. He asked me for a very big sum from the Prime Minister's Fund. That fund would vanish away if I gave such sums. I am, however, for the present sending him a cheque for Rs. 50,000.

I feel that the Congress Punjab Relief Fund should be utilised for giving relief to refugees from Eastern Pakistan also. I am told that both you and Bapu felt that this would be beyond the scope of that Fund. That was right, of course. Nevertheless, when

[1] Wife of Acharya J. B. Kripalani; member, CA, 1946; member, CWC, 1950-52; Lok Sabha, 1952-62; Chief Minister, UP, October 1963 to March 1967

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the fund was collected, other developments had not taken place, and I am quite sure that donors would not object to any such use of the Fund. In order to get over the technical difficulty I suggest that a notice be sent to the newspapers on your behalf or on behalf of your committee controlling the Congress Punjab Relief Fund, stating that the need for relief had arisen apart from the Punjab refugees, and that you felt that this should be included in the scope of the fund. The problem is an identical one whether you see it in refugees from West Punjab, or Sind, or Kashmir, or East Bengal. You may state, therefore, in your notice that you propose to use the money for refugees from all these places. In case any donor does not agree with this, he can communicate with you and tell you about his objection and his money will then be used for refugees from West Punjab or Western Pakistan. Such a public notice would put you right technically, legally and morally. I rather doubt if any donor is going to write to you and object. If some do object, their money can be used as they desire.

I hope you will agree with this proposal as this will give you a free hand to use part of the money in Bengal. Most of our Government resources have gone to helping people from Western Pakistan. Bengal is coming more and more into the picture and, therefore, it is desirable to have more resources to help it.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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CHAPTER IX

INCOME-TAX ISSUE—CHETTY RESIGNS

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New Delhi
14 January 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from the Chief Justice of India regarding the appointment of the Government of India's Solicitor in Bombay.

2. I believe the position of the Government of India's Solicitor in Bombay is a very responsible one and it is the usual practice to appoint solicitors of high standing. I note that Mr. Jayakar,[1] who has been appointed, is not up to the standard and will not do, but I do not know what we can do to remedy matters.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
12 January 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

I returned from Bombay on Saturday night. While I was in Bombay I came to learn that it is intended to change the Government of India's Solicitor in Bombay, and I was informed that Mr. Jayakar is expected to be appointed to the post.

I do not know Mr. Jayakar personally, but he is a junior member of the firm of Nanu Hormusjee & Co. which is a small firm of solicitors. I do not

[1] M. R. Jayakar: Leader, Swaraj Party in Bombay Council, 1923-25; member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1926; delegate to Indian Round Table Conference in London; Privy Councillor; successively Judge of Federal Court, (India) and of International Court of Justice at the Hague

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think Mr. Jayakar has much experience and the office establishment and premises are small.

I do not, in the least, desire to interfere in appointments of law officers unconnected with the Federal Court. I have written this to you only because I want the Government not to be severely criticised in its selection of a person, who may be found unable to cope with the work and may not have the experience to handle important questions which may arise in Bombay and which may vitally affect the Government of India. It is only to draw your attention to the views expressed by senior members of the legal profession and the judiciary that I have thought fit to write this to you.

Yours sincerely,
H. J. Kania

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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10 Albuquerque Road
New Delhi
24 January 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter which I had sent to the Hon'ble the Prime Minister before I went to Bombay on 19 December, for your information and assistance in drafting the new Constitution. I could not send it earlier as either you or I were away from Delhi mostly in the meantime.

Yours sincerely,
H. J. Kania

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

LETTER DATED 18 DECEMBER 1947, FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA TO PANDIT NEHRU

With the return of Sir B. N. Rau[1] from abroad I assume that the Constitution of India is now being finally drafted in order to be put before the Constituent Assembly at its next meeting.

[1] ICS; jurist and administrator; Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, 1944-1945; India's permanent representative to the UN; Judge of International Court of Justice

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You are aware that even when the Governors, the Executive Councillors and the Chief Justices were all English, there existed a convention under which appointments of High Court judges were recommended by the Chief Justice direct to the Governor. In his turn, the Governor conveyed the recommendations to the Governor-General and the same were ultimately sent to the Secretary of State. All throughout, the Home Department of the province or of the Central Government had nothing to do with these recommendations and appointments. This convention was the recognition of the principle that the judiciary should not be under the executive. I believe it is recognised that the judiciary of the land so far has been above board, free from party politics and the average citizen enjoys the confidence of the judiciary as an independent body to which he can look for protection of his rights even where a dispute is between the individual and the State. This reputation has been earned here after several struggles and I think should be cherished by our National Government. Under the new Constitution, this aspect will be more important as there may arise disputes between the Dominion of India and the Indian States acceding to the Dominion in respect of certain matters. The States will have to deal with the executive Government in respect of those matters and may not have the same confidence in the judiciary if the judiciary is under any department of the executive Government of the Dominion of India.

Under the Constitution Act, provisions can be made for the appointment, the salary, pension, leave and removal of the judges. In addition to that, I think it will be desirable to insert a provision under the Act, or to frame statutory rule under the Act, defining the relations between the judiciary and the executive. All communications in respect of the appointments and the grievances, if any, of the judges should come from the Chief Justice of the provincial High Court, through the Governor and not through the Home Department of the province. I recognise that the Governor-General or the President, who will be an elected person, will have to consult the Cabinet according to the Rules of Business framed for working the Central Government. It seems to me, however, fundamentally essential that the High Courts, the Federal Court and the Supreme Court (when established) should not be considered a part of, or working under, any department of the executive Government of India. It should be an independent branch of the Government in touch directly with the Governor-General or the President of the Dominion of India.

I am sure the Cabinet will agree to the principle of keeping the judiciary free from the control of the executive. The duty and credit for maintaining this high tradition is on the Government in existence when the Constitution and the statutory rules are framed, and I have written this to you confidently hoping that you share my desire to safeguard the dignity and independence of the judiciary and will do the needful in the matter.

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I am prompted to write this letter having regard to what has been happening in the Madras High Court recently.

The work of the Federal Court and the Arbitral Tribunal does not require my presence in Delhi just now. I am going to Bombay on the 19th instant for some work and shall return by 11 January. I shall be available thereafter here for any discussion which may be considered necessary on the points mentioned in this letter or on the chapter on judiciary in the proposed Constitution.

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New Delhi
30 January 1948

My dear Kania,

Thank you for your letter of 24 January 1948. I am sure your views will be very helpful to us in dealing with the subject.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice H. J. Kania
Chief Justice of India
10 Albuquerque Road
New Delhi

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10 Albuquerque Road
New Delhi
16 March 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

To consider the draft of the new Constitution of India in so far as it affects the judiciary and also to consider certain questions affecting the High Courts and the judiciary generally, I have called a conference of the Chief Justices of the Provincial High Courts, in Delhi on the 26th and 27th instant.

I shall be glad if you can give me the pleasure of your company at a lunch at the Delhi Gymkhana Club on Saturday, the 27th instant, at 1.15 p.m.

Yours sincerely,
H. J. Kania

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister of India
1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi

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New Delhi
4 April 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

I trust your progress is continuing and you will be able to resume your normal duties in a week or so now.

I am going to Assam today for the opening of the new High Court. It is a strange coincidence that the first High Court inaugurated after the Independence Act has to have an English ICS Chief Justice although the appointment is only for a year.

I shall return on Friday next, at night. I wonder what has been done in respect of the Allahabad High Court judge. I draw your attention to this fact because within a few weeks the Federal Court vacation will commence. I had pointed out to Mr. Shankar the urgency of expediting the matter if the judge and/or the Government insist on an enquiry by the Federal Court. I trust you will give the necessary directions to ascertain the facts so that I may know the same when I return.

Yours sincerely,
H. J. Kania

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
8 April 1948

My dear Harilal,

Thank you for your letter of 4 April 1948.

At first sight, it might appear a bit strange that an ICS Chief Justice should have been appointed for the Assam High Court, but the prejudice of the Assamese against the Bengali is so deep-rooted that apparently the Prime Minister of Assam felt that an ICS British judge would be better than a Bengali from the bar. Local talent is of course not of the requisite standard.

As regards the Allahabad High Court judge, the papers were sent, as advised by you, to the Advocate-General for drawing up

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a charge. They have not yet been received back, although we said that they should be sent back by 28 March or so.

I am now much better, but the doctors have asked me to take rest for some time more.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Harilal Kania
Chief Justice of India
New Delhi

236

New Delhi
27 January 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

On my return from tour, I have seen the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 19 January 1948. I feel that the powers which we have now given to the Income-Tax (Investigation) Commission are rather drastic and will have an unsettling effect on business. We can ill-afford to upset seriously the business world in India at this time of crisis. On the one side, we are straining every nerve to stimulate production by carrying the employers with us. If, on the other side, we make such drastic changes, it would virtually mean not only upsetting what we have so far succeeded in achieving in restoring confidence, but also creating further lack of confidence. I feel that, before finalising the changes, we should have a further opportunity of discussion in the Cabinet, so that, if necessary, we could make suitable changes to relax the rigours of the law.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
28 January 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have your letter of 27 January about the Income-Tax Investigation Commission. This matter was considered at some length in the Cabinet and a full discussion took place. Varadachari, Chairman of the Commission, was also present. Both he

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and Shanmukham Chetty[1] stated that without the additional powers the Commission would be completely helpless. Indeed, it would do more harm than good. The choice was either not to have the Commission or to give it these additional powers. It is hardly possible or desirable to do away with the Commission at this stage. That would create a very bad public impression. It was pointed out that the powers given to this Commission were less than those given to Congressional commissions in the US set up for this purpose. We have appointed a very high-power board in whose judgment we can trust. The only power to which objection has been taken is the power to investigate account books etc., and the delegation of this authority to some officers. In a sense this is done even now by income-tax officers though not with that sanction. Apart from income-tax, any magistrate can issue a search warrant. So that in effect nothing unusual has been done.

This morning I discussed this matter again with Shanmukham Chetty and he told me that after full consideration he felt that the additional powers should be given to the Commission. Otherwise the Commission might as well be wound up. There appeared to be no half-way house.

If you still think that the matter should be put up before the Cabinet again I shall certainly ask for this to be done. But I rather doubt if after this full consideration and decision any change is likely to be made.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
29 January 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 January 1948 about the Income-Tax Investigation Commission.

In view of the position explained by you, I agree that no useful purpose will be served by our taking up the matter

[1] President, Central Legislative Assembly, 1933-35; first Finance Minister of free India

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again in the Cabinet, though I still feel that the cumulative effect would be some lack of confidence in the business world.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
5 February 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Some days ago I sent you a copy of my D.O. dated 27 January addressed to our colleague, Mr. Shanmukham Chetty, regarding the decision taken on the proposed amendments to the Taxation on Income (Investigation Commission) Act at a Cabinet meeting at which both of us were not present. I have had no reply from Mr. Chetty to that up till now. In that connection, I may invite your attention to the fact that last year when Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan brought this Bill before the Cabinet, he agreed to the Cabinet's suggestion that the names of parties whose cases would be referred to the Investigation Commission, with the prima facie evidence for such reference, would be put up to the Cabinet for approval. I understand that in spite of this assurance, the Finance Ministry have already submitted a list of names to the Commission. May I be permitted to make a suggestion that the amendments proposed being of such a radical nature, it may be advisable to consult a few business men before these amendments are introduced in the House?

You may kindly consider these aspects and, if you think it desirable, you may take such action as you deem best.

Yours sincerely,
C. H. Bhabha[1]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

[1] Commerce Member, Interim Government, September 1946; Member, Works, Mines and Power, November 1946; Commerce Minister, 15 August 1947; resigned in April 1948; Director, Central Bank of India; Chairman, Eastern Shipping Corporation

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Dehra Dun
15 June 1948

My dear Neogy,

You remember we had a discussion here during your visit to Dehra Dun about the withdrawal of cases from the Income-Tax Investigation Commission. I had a talk with Jawaharlal also and am enclosing a copy of a letter which I am writing to him. Shankar has also had a talk with Gopalaswami, who agreed that the Cabinet decision as worded was defective and said that he had written to Jawaharlal on the subject. What is required now is to arrange that the withdrawal is regularised by the Commission before 30 June. Under the amended Act, a withdrawal can be effected with the consent of the Commission only up to 30 June 1948. I hope it will be possible for you to secure the Commission's consent before that date. You might be able to do so by contacting the Chairman and explaining the unfortunate history of this case.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. K. C. Neogy
Minister for Commerce
Government of India
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Dehra Dun
15 June 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I spoke to you here on the 11th regarding the withdrawal of certain cases from the Income-Tax Investigation Commission. Later I remembered that 30 June was the last date by which under the amended Act these cases could be withdrawn. Thereafter, there can be no withdrawal of cases. I do feel strongly that if we do not have a prima facie case against any of them, it is our duty to avoid harassment to them and to see that the cases are withdrawn. The fact that they are the leading industrialists and the possibility that

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on that account there may be criticism of the withdrawal of these cases should not deter us from doing the right thing by them. The machinery was devised to punish the guilty not to oppress the innocent. I feel certain that any other approach to this matter would upset the industrial world and seriously prejudice our economic programme. With a sensitive share market and suspicious industrialists, I doubt if with the best will in the world we can make much headway.

I hope, therefore, that it will be possible for you to put matters right before it is too late, i.e. before 30 June.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

241

New Delhi
22 June 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

In continuation of my telephonic conversation, I enclose for your information a copy of the letter I wrote to Panditji on the 19th.

Yours sincerely,
K. C. Neogy

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
19 June 1948

My dear Panditji,

Re: Income-Tax Investigation Commission

Please refer to my letter of the 15th instant. It was my intention to refer to this matter at yesterday's Cabinet meeting, but there was hardly any time.

2. I have since received from Sardar Patel a copy of his letter of 15th addressed to you, with a covering letter to me, of which I enclose a copy. His opinion seems to be that all that we need do is to make sure that the Commission regard the letter of withdrawal of 12 March 1948 as if it were an application for withdrawal made under the amended Act, so that the Com-

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mission may also apply its mind to the cases and arrive independently at a decision, possibly agreeing with Government that there were no prima facie cases for investigation. You will recollect that I had shown you a rough draft of a small amending Ordinance prepared by the Law Ministry, to secure the application to these cases of the procedure of withdrawal under the amending Act. I still think that that is the best course to adopt. The amendment, as passed by the Legislature, authorises Government to apply for withdrawal and also prescribes the safeguard in the form of requiring the consent of the Commission. The present opposition to the Finance Minister's action arises mainly on account of the fact that the withdrawal was made at a time when the legal safeguard was not there. If we now bring the safeguard into operation by means of the suggested Ordinance, the criticism is likely to disappear. It would also obviate all legal uncertainties as to whether the withdrawal was valid.

3. I suggest that the matter may be considered at the next Cabinet meeting. The Additional Secretary, Revenue Division (Padhi), should be called to attend the meeting to answer any questions that may not be clear to Ministers.

Yours sincerely,
K. C. Neogy

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

242

New Delhi
16 July 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have written to Shanmukham together with its enclosures. You will see how the provisions of the Income-Tax Investigation Act are being abused and how it is leading to most unfortunate consequences for the country. I have no doubt that such activities would lead to considerable uneasiness in business circles which, in our present economic position, we must avoid.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
16 July 1948

My dear Shanmukham,

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I have received through the post and which purports to have issued from the office of the Commissioner of Income-Tax, Bombay. You will notice that it requires preparation of a list of cases for the Income-Tax Investigation Commission as widely as possible. Indeed, some sentences can be construed to mean that, even if some innocent persons are included, it won't much matter and that the Income-Tax officers should err on the side of indiscretion and indiscriminate entries, rather than caution and careful consideration. This sort of procedure is bound to affect adversely the money market and the industrialists who are already in a somewhat panicky frame of mind due, I regret to say, to some indiscreet remarks of high-placed persons. You are fully aware of our tight monetary position and the shy capital for industrial enterprise. I do not think we can afford to create further lack of confidence, and I would advise you to see that such improper instructions are not issued and that the harassment of innocent persons is avoided. As far as I can see, the intention was to refer the cases to the Investigating Commission after careful scrutiny, and only where it was established to the satisfaction of the Government prima facie that an evasion of tax had taken place. I hope it will be possible for you to set matters right.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri R. K. Shanmukham Chetty
Minister for Finance
New Delhi

PS.

I should like to add that the time within which the lists are to be prepared and the manner in which they are to be prepared are both very important and disregard of the usual care and attention in this matter involves an abuse of the provisions of the Act which can hardly be condoned.

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LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF INCOME-TAX, BOMBAY

Office of the Commissioner of Income-Tax
Bombay-Mofussil Bombay
16 December 1947

My dear Vaish,

Please see Padhi's secret letter C. No.: 64-5 (I.T.)/47 dated 11-12-1947 requiring you to request in the form prescribed on cases to be referred to the Investigation Commission before 31-12-1947. With this letter Padhi has also enclosed a list. You will be surprised to see that this list does not contain even a single name of your Range, and this is due to the fact that so far no list of cases to be referred was sent to the Board. I find from the file that some reports were also expected from the I.T.Os, through their I.A.Cs probably under the impression created by the newspapers that the Investigation Commission will not function at all, this matter was not pursued. The Board's list I see is based only on information supplied some time ago about persons who were stated to have purchased large business or shares in such business. It is a pity that no such cases of purchases of interest by Ahmedabad assessees in large businesses were given. In Bombay city, the report to be sent to Padhi in this connection is also based on information about large acquisition of properties about which details were collected from the Sub-Registrar's Office, Bombay city. I understand from Mr. Sabnis that similar information was collected about transfers of immovable properties in Ahmedabad area. For this purpose those extracts may be looked into. Your confidential instructions to the I.T.Os contain the various ways which the secret profits would have been invested by your assessees. You must report on all such cases in respect of which you can have a reasonable presumption that the assessee must have made a secret profit of 5 lakhs or more without accounting for I.T. purposes, since the declaration of war up-to-date. If we do not include them now our chances for an investigation of such cases by the Commission [are] once for all lost. It is for this important reason Padhi has asked the I.A.Cs to insure themselves that all cases required to be referred to the Commission whether mentioned in the list or not are reported to him. You are in charge of one of the most important ranges noted [for] tax evasion. It is in the lips of everybody that Ahmedabad is full of persons who have amassed enormous wealth in black-marketing and other ways and successfully evaded taxation. You have yourself admitted this in so many of your references. It behoves you therefore to bring your list as complete as possible. I won't mind even if you err on the right side, because if you now let slip this opportunity to

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have the reputed black-marketeers of Ahmedabad included in the list they would escape. . . . Generally speaking, I am sure all the big managing agents of spinning and weaving mills, wholesale dealers of cloth and others with large turnovers whose honesty for I.T. purposes is doubted should appear in the list. I am anxious that no such case should escape your notice. It is for this reason, I am requesting Mr. Sabnis to proceed straight to Ahmedabad, though according to this plan he should have gone to Surat. Both of you should discuss the cases of important assessees and report on them no matter at present to whose range such cases belonged. It is true that you may not have now full details to be given in the form. But the information collected about such cases from the ITOs orally may be the basis for preparing this report. It is immaterial to consider in what stage the assessment proceedings are. If any information could not be given about any item at present you can roughly estimate the figures noting the word estimate within brackets and explaining why you are unable to give the correct data. Mr. Sabnis will be able to give you any other information required. For example, the cases of public limited companies need not be reported, but you should not miss considering the cases of principal shareholders of all companies or as firm, an association of persons or individuals reported to have made secret profit of 5 lakhs or more since the declaration of war up-to-date. This limit of 5 lakhs refers to the entire year and not to any particular period of one year.

Yours sincerely,
Swaminadha

243

New Delhi
27 July 1948

My dear Shanmukham,

I am enclosing a copy of a telegram which I have received from Kasturbhai Lalbhai.[1] I should like to know what this is about and whether there is any force in what he says.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Shanmukham Chetty
New Delhi

[1] Industrialist and banker; Director, Reserve Bank of India, 1937-49 and 1957-60

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ENCLOSURE

TELEGRAM

24 July 1948

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

REFERRING SELECT COMMITTEE INCOME TAX REVISION SECTION THIRTYFOUR. PRAY PERSUADE SELECT COMMITTEE NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE AMENDMENT AS OTHERWISE IT WILL CREATE INDEFINITENESS SUCCESSIVE ASSESSMENTS AND WILL SERIOUSLY INTERFERE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES. SUGGEST ATLEAST INDEPENDENT LEGAL ADVICE ABOUT REPERCUSSIONS ON THE WHOLE BODY OF THE ACT IF AMENDMENT APPROVED.

KASTURBHAI LALBHAI

244

New Delhi
31 July 1948

My dear Sardar,

Please refer to your letter dated 27 July 1948 enclosing a copy of a telegram from Kasturbhai Lalbhai. The telegram refers to an amendment of the Indian Income-Tax Act which is now before a Select Committee of the Legislature. The proposed amendment has been examined in great detail by the Income-Tax Investigation Commission in consultation with all the leading Chambers of Commerce and business interests. Every point of view is, therefore, before the Select Committee.

Yours sincerely,
R. K. Shanmukham Chetty

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
15 August 1948

My dear Sardar,

I am herewith enclosing copy of a letter that I have sent to the Prime Minister today.

Yours sincerely,
R. K. Shanmukham Chetty

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
15 August 1948

My dear Panditji,

With reference to the question that was raised about the withdrawal of certain groups of cases that were referred to the Income-Tax Investigation Commission, I had explained to you in detail in a letter which I wrote to you, the circumstances that led to the withdrawal of the cases and the steps that were subsequently taken. As I had mentioned in that letter, a number of cases had to be sent to the Commission before 31 December 1947 according to the provisions of the Act as it then stood, and there was no time to make a detailed examination as to whether there was a prima facie case in relation to each one of them. It was the intention of the Central Board of Revenue to examine these in detail, and then withdraw such of the cases in which it was found there was no prima facie case. It was as a result of such examination that these groups of cases were withdrawn. However, the cases have now been referred back to the Commission, and the reference has been followed up by a request for withdrawal with the consent of the Commission in terms of S. 5 of the Act.

2. This procedure was adopted with your full concurrence. I was surprised that, in spite of this, this matter was brought up for consideration at a party meeting on the 13th inst. Some members raised the question of the date of the original withdrawal. On making enquiries I find that in consultation with the Chairman of the Central Board of Revenue, I had issued oral

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instructions for withdrawal on 19 February 1948. The actual order, however, was issued on 12 March 1948.

3. The question of the date of withdrawal in relation to the proceedings of the Select Committee becomes relevant, in my opinion, only when my bona fides in this matter is in doubt. You might remember that, on 13 July 1948 the day after my return from London, when I saw you in this connection, I told you that if you had any doubts in this matter you should permit me to tender my resignation. You then assured me that you had no doubts about my bona fides and you reiterated this assurance when I spoke to you again about this matter at noon on the day of the party meeting.

4. I was painfully surprised at the trend of the discussions at the party meeting. You announced at the end of the meeting that you would like to think the matter over and come to a decision. With a view to enable you to reach a decision without any embarrassment, I herewith place my resignation in your hands.

Yours sincerely,
R. K. Shanmukham Chetty

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister's House
New Delhi

PANDIT NEHRU'S REPLY TO MR. SHANMUKHAM CHETTY'S LETTER

New Delhi
16 August 1948

My dear Shanmukham,

Thank you for your letter of 15 August. I appreciate what you have written.

The question of withdrawal of some cases from the Income-Tax Enquiry Commission has been repeatedly considered by the Cabinet and, ultimately, as you pointed out, it has been decided that the consent of the Commission should be sought before any case is withdrawn. This is in conformity with the spirit and letter of the amending Act, and I am quite sure that is the correct procedure to adopt. This decision was made in consultation with some of our colleagues and in full concurrence with them. At no time during these discussions about the propriety of the procedure to be adopted was there any question before me of your bona fides in the matter.

When, subsequently, another aspect of this matter was brought before me relating to certain dates concerning the amendment Bill and the withdrawal of the cases, I felt that an error had been committed, and that the members of the Assembly might well raise an objection to this. I have gone into this matter very carefully now, and it seems to me clear that the decision to withdraw the cases was taken before the Bill was introduced into the

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Assembly, though the actual order was passed subsequently. So far as I am concerned no question of doubting your bona fides arises in this matter; and indeed, it was hardly possible to by-pass the provisions of the amending Bill without the fact being known. I feel, however, that in the circumstances when you had already sponsored the Bill before the Cabinet, with the express provision that no withdrawal should take place without the consent of the Commission, and this Bill was on the point of being introduced into the Assembly, there should have been no withdrawal without reference to the Commission. In view of the fact that mention was made about the possibility of withdrawals in the Assembly debate, information about the steps already taken should have been placed before the Select Committee of the Assembly. I feel sure myself that this was an error of judgment, and you had not applied your mind to this matter. This error has naturally led many members to think that the ignoring of the Assembly in regard to this particular matter was a discourtesy. If this aspect had struck you, you would no doubt have informed the Assembly, and referred the withdrawals to the Commission for their consent. It was unfortunate that you had not thought of this at the time, and thus a certain degree of misapprehension has arisen.

I have given deep thought to this matter. While there is no question in my mind of your bona fides being challenged, I feel that an error of this type having been committed, it is right, as you yourself have done, that you should place your resignation in my hands. I think you have acted perfectly correctly. As you told me in the course of our talk, you feel yourself that this mistake should not have occurred and that it was essential for us to maintain the highest standards of public conduct in our work. I am sure that my colleagues in the Cabinet as well as the members of the Assembly will appreciate the action you have taken.

I am accepting your resignation, but I do so with deep regret. During the year we have worked together in the Government of India, I have admired your ability and your application to the heavy and intricate work that you have had to face. We shall miss you in the Cabinet and in the Government. But though you will not be associated with us in the Government, I have no doubt that you will continue to apply your great abilities to the service of the nation.

Pending such other arrangements as we might make, you might hand over charge of your portfolio to Neogy. I am informing him of this.

I think it will be desirable for a brief statement to be made in the House tomorrow, so that the members of the Assembly might be directly informed of the development that has taken place.

With all good wishes to you, I am

Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Shri Shanmukham Chetty

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New Delhi
20 September 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

As you already know, Dr. Matthai has agreed to take charge of the Finance portfolio. I have invited Gopalaswami Ayyangar to take the Railway and Transport portfolio vacated by Matthai. I propose to inform the Cabinet of this on Wednesday next and to make a public announcement on Thursday.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

247

New Delhi
7 February 1948

Poojya Sardar,

I must confess that your offer to Dr. Jivraj Mehta[1] to leave me and to go to Baroda without any previous reference to me has hurt me not a little.

Dr. Mehta is my right hand man. I asked him to come because I wanted a man like him to reorientate the whole outlook and approach on health matters and to bring Government into touch and sympathy with non-governmental medical opinion. The task is immense and is only just being begun—e.g. bringing about fundamental changes even in Delhi—for we have so far been overwhelmed with refugee work. He was proving a tower of strength, and I do feel it is quite wrong to take a man of his calibre from his own field and put him into another key position is extremely awkward. You have spoken direct to him. I definitely do not want him to go. But I will never keep him

1 Congress leader of Baroda; Director-General, Health Services, 1947-48; Minister in Bombay, 1949-60; Chief Minister, Gujarat, 1960-63; High Commissioner in London, 1963-67; Member, Lok Sabha, 1971

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forcibly either. The ultimate decision must be his. I have nothing more to say.

With pranams,

Amrit

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New Delhi
8 February 1948

My dear Rajkumari,

I am distressed to find that you feel hurt so much about my mentioning to Dr. Jivraj Mehta regarding the prospects of Baroda. It was in order to avoid this that I decided to communicate in your presence the message which I had received on behalf of the Baroda Praja Mandal for Dr. Jivraj Mehta. I can assure you that there was no intention on my part to sidetrack you at all, nor to embarrass you. Dr. and Mrs. Jivraj Mehta belong to Baroda. I know how much they feel for Baroda State. I thought it was only fair that I communicate to him in your presence what Baroda people wanted him to do. It was far from my wish in any way to deprive you of his services. The arrangement is obviously subject to your approval, and I thought the best way to proceed about the business was to tell Dr. Jivraj Mehta in your presence, so that you would also know all the aspects involved.

I hope I have made my position clear. I do not wish to exercise, nor was it ever my intention in any way to put pressure on Dr. Jivraj Mehta to accept the offer or on you to release him. Both of you are at perfect liberty to deal with the matter as you think best. I have nothing further to do with it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Rajkumari Amrit Kaur
Minister for Health
New Delhi

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New Delhi
20 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

The question of planned development of the forests in India in consultation with the provinces is engaging my attention. Apart from the fact that forests are a great national wealth, their development is also necessary for soil conservation and agricultural progress. A well co-ordinated all-India policy is required for this purpose and in any such policy the States have their place. The position at present is that while some of the larger States like Travancore, Mysore, Gwalior and Kashmir have properly constituted Forest Departments and look after their forest wealth, in many of the other States the position is not so satisfactory. In the Central India Group, Rewa, Orchha, Chhatarpura, Panna, Bhopal, Indore, Dewas, Dhar are all capable of forest development if properly planned and managed. In the Rajputana Group, while Kotah and Bundi forests are comparatively well managed, there is considerable room for improvement in Udaipur and Jaipur; in the rest of Rajputana State, the problem is one mainly of increasing fuel supply. In Kathiawar States there is very little scope of timber production for export but the forests are capable of being planned for development as fuel resources and small timber for local consumption particularly for boat building. The main States in this Group which are capable of such development are Junagadh, Porbandar, Navanagar, Palitana and Cutch. Kolhapur in the Deccan Group and Tehri Garhwal in the Punjab Group are other important States fit for forest development.

If an all-India policy is to be evolved a clear idea of the conditions in the States, the existing system of management and the potentialities of development is desirable. I would like to have your advice as to the steps which would be appropriate if the co-operation of the States is also to be secured.

Yours sincerely,
Jairamdas Doulatram

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
24 February 1948

My dear Jairamdas,

Thank you for your letter of 20 February 1948. It is difficult for me to give any advice until I know on what lines it is proposed to have an all-India plan. I feel it would be useless our approaching the States without some definite idea on what we want them to do. If you could let me know which way your mind is working, I would try to see in what manner the States Ministry could assist you in securing the co-operation and support of the States concerned.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Jairamdas Doulatram
Minister for Food & Agriculture
New Delhi

251

New Delhi
21 February 1948

My dear Rafi,[1]

The question of the reconstitution of the Air Transport Licensing Board was referred by you to the Cabinet some months ago. I offered some comments on your proposals and also wrote a personal letter to you about it on 2 November 1947. I do not remember to have heard anything since then either in reply to my letter or as regards the proposals. It is possible you were waiting for some decision on the question of nationalisation. I feel that the present position is unsatisfactory and not conducive to the creation of a sense of confidence in the public. This state of affairs should, in my opinion, cease as soon as possible.

[1] R. A. Kidwai: Joined Congress in non-co-operation movement; member and whip, Swaraj Party, in Central Assembly, 1926-29; member, CWC, 1956; Minister in UP, 1936-39 and 1946; member, CA, later Central Minister of Communication and of Food in Nehru Cabinet

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I would be grateful if you would kindly let me know how the matter stands.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai
Minister for Communications
New Delhi

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New Delhi
21 February 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have just received your letter about re-organisation of the Air Transport Licensing Board. At the time the present Board was being formed you had agreed to its formation temporarily and had made certain proposals for the reconstitution of the Board on a permanent basis. The file dealing with the reconstitution has come up to me and is awaiting a personal discussion with you for which I seek an early opportunity to meet.

Yours sincerely,
Rafi Ahmed Kidwai

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
22 February 1948

My dear Rafi,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February regarding the Air Transport Licensing Board.

I suggest that we come out of the Assembly some time tomorrow and discuss this question in my room (Room No. 12 Council House).

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai
New Delhi

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Gandhi Ashram
Hatundi, (Ajmer)
27 March 1948

Poojya Sardar Sahib,

Respectful pranams.

I herewith enclose a note concerning the proposed set-up for Ajmer-Merwara. Shri Shankar Prasad finds it all right. Thanks to some peculiar problems over here, early action seems necessary.

I hope you are steadily improving. Had the matter been not urgent, I would not have troubled you in this state of your health.

Yours sincerely,
Haribhau Upadhyaya[1]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
(Original in Hindi)

ENCLOSURE

NOTE ON AJMER-MERWARA

I have had consultation with my colleagues in the Advisory Council regarding the proposed changes in the present administrative set-up of the province of Ajmer-Merwara during the interim period. All are of the opinion that there should be a council of ministers not exceeding four in number with the Chief Minister at the head, to aid and advise the Chief Commissioner in the exercise of his duties and functions.

The Chief Commissioner shall be the constitutional head and will choose his ministers on the advice of the Leader to be elected by the Advisory Council and the ministers shall hold office during his (Chief Commissioner's) pleasure.

In case of any difference of opinion between the Chief Commissioner and his ministers on any matter, the Chief Commissioner may refer it to the Hon'ble the Home Minister whose decision thereon shall be final.

These proposals have been discussed with the Chief Commissioner also. The Chief Commissioner is in agreement with the opinion of the members

[1] Congress worker of Ajmer who became Chief Minister of Ajmer and later Minister in Rajasthan Cabinet after Independence

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of the Advisory Council with regard to the procedure for the selection of the council of ministers as contained herein above, and with regard to the powers to be assigned to the council of ministers, he is of opinion that they be decided by the Central Government.

Mukut Beharilal Bhargava

Ajmer
27 March 1948

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New Delhi
27 March 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

You will remember that I issued an appeal for the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund on 24 January. In this appeal I had suggested a committee for this fund consisting of

the Prime Minister,
the President of the Indian National Congress,
the Deputy Prime Minister,
the Finance Minister,
a representative of the Tata Trustees,
a representative of industry and commerce to be chosen by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce.

It was my intention to organise widespread collections for this fund. But within a week of this appeal Gandhiji was assassinated. Soon after the question of raising a memorial fund for him came before the public. Because of all this, no effort has been made at all to collect money for the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. Nevertheless, contributions have come. Some of these came even before the appeal was issued. The total amount received up-to-date amounts to about Rs. 7,47,000. Out of this, Rs. 11,000 earmarked for Kashmir relief have been paid to the Kashmir Relief Fund. Many of the other contributions have also been earmarked for special purposes. Rs. 5,000 have been given by me to Shri Jairamdas Doulatram for relief work.

Apart from this the only other expenditure has been on postage, stationery, etc. and Rs. 50 a month as allowance to the clerk who keeps accounts.

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I have received a request from Dr. Choithram P. Gidwani[1] of the Sind Provincial Congress Relief Centre in New Delhi for a grant of Rs. 50,000 for the welfare of refugees from Sind. This is to be applied to Sind refugees not only in Delhi but in other parts of India also. I am sending him a cheque for this amount.

I hope that it might be possible to hold a meeting of the Committee a little later to consider how the money collected should be spent. There is no immediate hurry for this.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
31 March 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

At the last Cabinet meeting I mentioned that it seemed to me necessary to appoint Parliamentary Secretaries soon. There had already been considerable delay in this matter largely because of me. From many points of view it has become essential to proceed with this matter before the present session of the Assembly ended and members retired to their homes.

Members of the Cabinet generally agreed with this and, thereupon, I suggested that each Minister might let me have the suggestions privately. It was not considered wholly necessary to have a Parliamentary Secretary for each Ministry immediately though ultimately that would have to be done. Perhaps it might be preferable to appoint some Parliamentary Secretaries now and some a month or two later. That would really depend on the recommendation of each Minister, so far as his own Ministry is concerned.

I suggested that each Minister might be good enough to indicate to me whether he would like to have a Parliamentary Secretary immediately or a month or two later; secondly, that he might indicate one or more names for this post; thirdly, he might also mention some additional names not for his own Ministry but possibly for others. If I could have these personal

[1] Congress leader of Sind; President, Sind PCC before Independence; chief spokesman of Sind in Congress organisation

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opinions and recommendations, it would help us in proceeding with this matter.

I need not add that the choice has to be made from among the members of the Assembly. I should be grateful for a very early reply.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

257

New Delhi
2 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 31 March 1948. I think two Parliamentary Secretaries would do for my Ministries; I should like to have Shri R. R. Diwakar and Shri S. K. Patil.

2. As regards other names, I would suggest the following:

Mr. Khandubhai K. Desai
Mr. Harihar Nath Shastri[1]
Mr. Frank Anthony[2]
Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari[3] and
Mr. K. Santhanam.[4]

I have gone through the list of members. I should very much have liked to suggest some one from the Indian States, but I find that all those who were worth considering have already secured appointments in the States themselves.

3. Now that the session has only a few days more to go, I think it is unnecessary to appoint Parliamentary Secretaries just now, though an announcement could be made before the House adjourns. I would suggest, therefore, that they may be appointed from about the date of the next session of the Constituent

1 Leading Congressman and labour leader of Kanpur; was associated with Indian National Trade Union Congress

2 MP and President, Anglo-Indian Association; India's representative to Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in 1948; member of CA, India

3 Twice Finance Minister and once Minister of Commerce & Industry in Union Cabinet

4 Journalist; Member, Indian Legislative Assembly, 1937-42; Minister of State for Railways and Transport, Government of India, October 1948-February 1952; Lieut-Governor, Vindhya Pradesh, 1952-56; Chairman, Third Finance Commission

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Assembly in May. At any rate, I would prefer this arrangement for my Parliamentary Secretaries.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

258

22 April 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

I am very sorry that owing to ill-health I am unable to attend the AICC meeting at Bombay on 23 and 24 April. At the same time, I feel I should communicate to my fellow members of the AICC a few words on some problems which, in my opinion, require serious consideration and which, I am sure, are engaging their attention. I should, therefore, be grateful if you would kindly convey to them the attached message from me.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President
Indian National Congress
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

SARDAR PATEL'S MESSAGE

It is with a heavy heart that under pressure of medical advice, I have to absent myself from this important session of the All India Congress Committee. My sorrow is two-fold. Firstly, the session is taking place in my own home-province and I should naturally have liked to be with my fellow members during their deliberations in Bombay. Secondly, so soon after Gandhiji's death and during such important deliberations it is so distasteful to me to deny myself the opportunity of an humble service to the nation and to the organisation to which we all owe so much.

2. Nevertheless, the love which you all bear to me and which you have shown in no unmistakable manner in the past has emboldened me to send these few words from my sick bed. I know full well what mental anguish and physical agony afflict your hearts in regard to the situation in Hyderabad. You cannot but agree that I fully share that distress and that my heart grieves no

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less than yours for the victims of many a tragedy that are being perpetrated both inside and around the borders of Hyderabad. I also fully realise what stakes are involved in the question of Hyderabad's future relationship with the Indian Dominion and of responsible government in the State, and I can assure you all that all my colleagues in the Cabinet are fully conversant with and keenly alive to the situation. There are difficulties and complexities which must be present to you all as much as they are present to us. I can assure you that nothing short of a satisfactory and honourable solution is desired by, or indeed, would be acceptable to us. You can depend on us, as you have depended on us so far, not to give away any of India's essential interest in this problem. I would, therefore, ask you to extend your confidence and trust to your Government and to bear for a while till we can obtain an acceptable solution of this tangle. Any incautious word or public discussion in a surcharged atmosphere would not assist us. I hope, therefore, I can appeal to you to maintain calm and restraint for a little while longer and to leave it to the Government to discharge its obligations to the people of this country and of Hyderabad in full realisation of the grave responsibilities which it involves.

3. All of you must realise through what critical times the country is passing today. Eternal vigilance is proverbially the price of liberty. We are all realising only too well the truth of that proverb. No Government has been called upon to face, within such a short time of assuming power from alien hands, problems of such diverse variety and stupendous magnitude. It is only because of this devotion, faith and loyalty of the people that we have been able to bear this burden with what we can all claim to be some success. We may have turned the corner, but we are not yet out of the wood. Indeed, in some respects problems of far greater dimensions are still to be faced. Nothing is more necessary in such circumstances than the consolidation of our forces and of our resources. Unity and more unity must be our watchword. Within the short period of six months, we have already achieved a great measure of success in securing that unity in the sphere in which we thought it was most difficult, viz. the Indian States. This has been possible by the sacrifices of the people and by the patriotism and statesmanship of the Princes. When you think of apportioning credit or praise, I hope you will not lose sight of this factor. If, however, we have to solve the problems with which we are likely to be faced in the near future, it is most essential that we close up our ranks and pool our resources. As an organisation, therefore, we must be even more closely knit and must now come together nearer and nearer. Discipline and an increasing sense of responsibility in what we say and what we do, a more practical approach to the problems and a greater regard for national as against parochial considerations would seem to be the need of the hour. The Congress has fought one of the greatest battles of freedom which has ever adorned the pages of history. It has fought it under the matchless inspiration and guidance of our departed leader. Let us keep alive

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the unity, the organisation and the indomitable spirit of that struggle. Let us keep burning the torch that that great soul has handed to us. It is only then that we can prove worthy of him and of our nation and of our heritage. May he still be the inspiration of you all in these deliberations.

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New Delhi
15 April 1948

My dear Ambedkar,[1]

I learnt from the papers about your marriage which is coming off today. Please accept my warmest congratulations and best wishes for a happy married life. I am sure if Bapu were alive he would have given you his blessings.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
Minister for Law
New Delhi

260

17 April 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

I and my wife join in acknowledging your good wishes on the occasion of our marriage and in saying how very thankful we are for the same.

I agree that Bapu, if he had been alive, would have blessed it.

I hope you have by now completely recovered.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
B. R. Ambedkar

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

[1] Professor of Economics, Bombay; called to Bar, 1923; member, RTC, 1930-32; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, July 1942-June 1946; member, CA; Law Member in Nehru Cabinet

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New Delhi
15 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

You will be interested in the enclosed copy of a despatch of the Delhi correspondent of the Daily Mail, London. It is a most mischievous message and a deliberate distortion of the actual conditions. I wonder what we can do to stop such nonsense.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

MESSAGE DATED 13 APRIL 1948 SENT BY MR. IZZARD, DELHI CORRESPONDENT OF THE DAILY MAIL, LONDON, TO DAILY MAIL

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Scheduled Caste (untouchable) Law Minister in the Government of India, will defy Hindu law when he marries a Brahmin girl in Delhi on Thursday. Brahmins—priestly order—are the highest caste in the Hindu religion, and it is a crime for a woman to marry outside the Brahmin caste. To avoid embarrassment to other members of the Government whose caste forbids them eating or entering the house of an untouchable, no announcement of the wedding is being made, and all Cabinet Ministers will be absent from Delhi on Thursday. Ambedkar's bride is a well known lady doctor here.

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CHAPTER X

A PRESENT FROM CHINA

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The Chinese Embassy
New Delhi
2 January 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

I take pleasure in presenting you with a pair of vases which I recently brought with me from China. I hope this gift will be accepted as a token of my admiration for an eminent statesman whose successful role in achieving national independence and practical wisdom and abundant will-power in helping to steer the ship of the state towards reconstruction and progress have won the respect of the Chinese people. You will see that the vases are of very thin and refined porcelain, which is valued for its distinctive and delicate artistic touch by the skilled hand.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your recent successful trips with such shining results in welding and solidifying a great part of India.

Wishing you happiness and good health,

Very sincerely yours,
Chia-luen Lo

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
Home Affairs, States, Information and Broadcasting
1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi

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New Delhi
7 January 1948

Dear His Excellency Dr. Lo Chia-luen,

Thank you for your letter of 2 January 1948, which I have seen this morning on my return from tour.

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I need not say how deeply I appreciate the beautiful present of a pair of vases which you have sent with your letter and how grateful I am for the kind words in which you have spoken of me. The vases are beautiful specimens of Chinese art, and I can assure you that I shall treasure them as valuable mementos not only of our personal friendly contact, but also of the abiding friendship between India and China.

With best wishes for 1948,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Dr. Lo Chia-luen
Ambassador of the Republic of China in India
Jind House
New Delhi

264

New Delhi
5 January 1948

My dear Jawaharlal/Gopalaswami,

You will be interested to read the attached extract of a report which we have received from our [Deputy] High Commissioner at Lahore on the analysis of daily news of the Pakistan Press dated 22 December. This is a specimen of the Inter-Dominion Agreement in action in Pakistan.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

The Hon'ble Mr. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
Minister for Transport and Railways
New Delhi

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ENCLOSURE

INDIAN INFORMATION SERVICES

144 Upper Mall
Lahore (Pakistan)
23 December 1947

DAILY NEWS ANALYSIS

Wednesday, 22 December

The proceedings of the Indian National Congress session at Jaipur continue to provide "useful clues" for newspapermen to abuse, discredit and denounce Indian leaders.

Sardar Patel is subjected to severe criticism for his alleged anti-Muslim activities. He is described as a sworn enemy of Muslims at whose hands no justice and fair play can be expected. Recent history is quoted in extenso to substantiate the fanatical trend of his mind. The responsibility for last year's bloodbath is placed on his shoulders.

Pandit Nehru is regarded as a weak-kneed opportunist who has neither the courage nor the power nor the desire to checkmate and counter the anti-Muslim moves of the Deputy Prime Minister. He is accused of camouflaging his intentions by nice words. It is further alleged that he has the same objective as Sardar Patel but is following a circuitous route to reach his destination. His internationalism is ridiculed. His condemnation of the Dutch action [in Indonesia] is jeered at. Comparisons are drawn between the "police actions" in Hyderabad and Indonesia.

The much-trumpeted democratic ideals of Pandit Nehru are regarded as a cloak for his imperialistic designs. His references to Pakistan at Jaipur are commented on by nearly all papers. The Indian Prime Minister's observation that he would not agree to a "reunion" even if Pakistan wanted it is labelled as wishful thinking. It is pointed out that Nehru's words reveal that he is still thinking in terms of reunion, and does not regard the division as a matter settled for all times to come. These observations by Pandit Nehru are scorned. . . . One paper went to the length of saying that Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan could point out with equal disdain that Pakistan would not agree to a reunion with India even if the latter wanted it.

Muni Lal
Press Attache to
Indian Deputy High Commissioner
in Pakistan
Lahore

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1 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi
22 January 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

A deputation of Sikhs under Giani Kartar Singh[1] met me yesterday and placed before me certain matters which required consideration and solution from their point of view. There is one matter relating to the political position of the Sikhs about which they are anxious that some decision should be taken at an early date. It is really a matter for the Advisory Committee on Minorities to deal with and I would like that it should be taken up and dealt with and put up for consideration by the Constituent Assembly. I am enclosing a copy of my note which deals with the other matters also raised and in which you may have interest. I am drawing particularly your attention to paragraph 4 which deals with the political question.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

A deputation of Sikhs led by Giani Kartar Singh saw me this morning (21 January 1948) and placed certain point which required consideration and solution.

1. A large number of gurdwaras, some of which are of historic importance, have fallen in Western Punjab, the most important of which are Nankana Sahib and Punja Sahib. There is no Sikh left in West Punjab now, except 17 persons who are in the Janmabhumi Gurdwara of Nankana Sahib for the purposes of sewa there. Some of the gurdwaras are being used by the Musalmans for their private use. The Muslim League or Pakistan flag is flying over some of them and there is no arrangement whatsoever for their sewa or for the pilgrims to go. There is one Gurdwara—Ravi Kartarpur—

[1] Akali leader, Minister in East Punjab; principal aide of Master Tara Singh

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which is within a mile of the Indian border on the other side of the Ravi and there are 125 villages belonging to India in the neighbourhood. The suggestion with regard to the gurdwaras are:—

(I) That something should be done to Nankana Sahib to ensure free passage of pilgrims and for continuing the sewa there. They suggest that it may be converted to some sort of free zone like Jerusalem.

(ii) As regards the other gurdwaras, the suggestion is that priests should be appointed for them and these priests should be treated as part of the staff of the High Commissioner so that their life may be secure. A particular officer should be appointed to look after these gurdwaras.

(iii) As regards Ravi Kartarpur Gurdwara, the suggestion is that that gurdwara has also historic importance and is very important and that the village should be exchanged with a village of the Indian Union so that this gurdwara may come within India.

2. A large number of abducted women are still on the other side and an attempt should be made to secure them. Up to now a very much larger number of abducted women have been rescued on the Indian side and made over to Pakistan, whereas the number so rescued on the other side of the border is very small. It is difficult to give figures about the number of abducted women but it is said that the number must be very large. It is not true to say that they cannot be very many, because quite a good number were rescued in the pockets which were cleared and taken to India. The fact is that only a small number of men and women were in the pockets whereas the bulk of those abducted had been transferred to long distances even before the question of clearing the pockets arose. It is these which have to be rescued. More vigorous efforts should be made to get them back.

3. It was one of the terms of agreement between India and Pakistan that religious and charitable endowments shall not be touched. Gurdwaras had large properties attached to them and particularly the gurdwara at Nankana Sahib had a large number of villages, all of which except two were occupied by the Sikhs. Something should be done to restore the properties of these gurdwaras.

4. The political position of the Sikhs should be secured. The Congress position has been that it would not do anything on the minority question without their consent. The position of the Sikhs has been regarded as peculiar, and it is necessary that something should be done to create confidence among them. The population of the Sikhs in the Punjab as it was apart from the States was 37½ lakhs. Of these about 20 lakhs were in the Eastern Punjab according to the national boundary and 17½ lakhs in the Western Punjab. Now there is no Sikh left in the Western Punjab and, except those who have been killed or otherwise destroyed, all have migrated to India. It is difficult to give any exact figures of those who are in the Punjab as distinguished from those

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who have passed over to Delhi or UP or other places, but roughly the Sikh population in the East Punjab now may be taken at about 33 lakhs or so, which is one third of the total population of East Punjab. The Sikhs have been enjoying, under the Constitution of 1935, 50 per cent weightage in representation, their population being 13 per cent of the total and their representation being 19 to 20 per cent. If the same proportion of weightage is maintained they will have about 50 per cent in the representation in the East Punjab and, in view of their peculiar position, this should be given to them otherwise they will feel a sense of injustice. If this is not altogether acceptable something may be done by way of readjustment of boundary to give them a position more consistent with their ideas. The districts of Rohtak and Gurgaon did not actually belong to the Punjab as the language is that of Delhi and their life and culture are also more like Delhi than of Punjab. If these two districts, which are predominantly Hindu with a very small Sikh population, could be attached to Delhi then the position of the Sikhs in East Punjab as it will be after the separation of these two districts will be very much better numerically speaking than it would otherwise be and a solution of the difficulty may be found by this readjustment. They feel that whereas the Mussalmans have got their Pakistan and the Hindus the rest of India, they should be given a position in the only province in which they are largely concentrated so that they may feel that they have a substantial share in the political rights and administration of the province.

As regards places like Delhi and UP where there is considerable Sikh population although not very large in proportion to the entire population, the Sikhs may be given the same rights as other minorities, i.e. reservation of seats according to population plus the right to contest additional general seats. They should also be given a status in the Centre by giving them extra representation.

5. The Sikhs have been the special target of the Muslim anger and they are still so. It is, therefore, necessary that the Sikhs in Sind should be evacuated. There are about 15,000 there spread over the province in small pockets. Arrangements should be made for their safe evacuation. They are all of the poorer type and they will very well fit in with the present economy of East Punjab from where a large body of Muslim artisans have gone over to the West Punjab. These Lohana Sikhs do more or less the same kind of work that the Muslim labourers used to do in the East Punjab and after they are shifted, they will be able to fill a gap which is being felt at present in the economy of the province.

These are the points on which they wanted satisfaction. They have a misgiving that by declaring that except the Kashmir question, other points have been more or less settled between India and Pakistan at the Security Council meeting, the case of the Sikhs regarding their gurdwaras etc. has been

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practically given up. This should not be and negotiation should be opened with the Pakistan Government to arrive at some satisfactory settlement regarding the gurdwaras. The question of the political position of the Sikhs in the Punjab and in India should also be taken up and decided soon otherwise there will be discontent and it will not be possible to restore confidence.

Rajendra Prasad

21-1-48

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Government House
New Delhi
23 January 1948

My dear Deputy Prime Minister,

I hear you only got back late this morning, and as we leave for Bhopal, Nagpur, Jubbulpore, Madras, etc. at 2.30., there does not appear much opportunity of seeing you to hear all your news; but if you have any special reason for wishing to see me before I leave, please do not hesitate to come straight round.

So far I have only seen reports in the Press of your activities and have not heard anything official, but it appears that you have again scored a brilliant success in your handling of this Kathiawar States problem.

I am also delighted that you have been to Bombay where I feel sure that your visit will have an equally beneficial result as your visit to Calcutta.

Yours very sincerely,
Mountbatten of Burma

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

267

New Delhi
18 April 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Rajaji has at last agreed to succeed Mountbatten as Governor-General. He has done this very reluctantly and because of my special insistence.

He is worried about Bengal. He suggests Katju for it. Katju of course is a good man, though I am not at all clear whether he

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will fit in with Bengalis. At the present moment he is the right man in the right place in Orissa. He gets on very well with the Ministry and the people and they all like him. He is happy in his work and likes Orissa. I am sure he would not like to change over.

I am waiting for Dr. Bidhan Roy's suggestion.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Camp Doon Court
Dehra Dun
26 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 April 1948.

I am glad Rajaji has accepted, though reluctantly, your proposal.

As regards Dr. Katju, I entirely agree with you that he is the right man in the right place in Orissa and we should not disturb him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

269

Government House
Calcutta
4 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I hope you are improving in the favourable conditions secured at Mussoorie.

You have fixed me up in Delhi. I have serious doubts as to how far I shall be of any use. If I can be of any use to you and Jawaharlalji, I do not mind being compelled to undergo the

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ordeal of Government House in New Delhi. A miracle may happen and make me really useful. That you have all confidence in me and extend your unbroken affection gives me much greater pleasure than the official announcement which thrills all my untutored friends.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

270

Mussoorie
6 May 1948

My dear Rajaji,

Many thanks for your letter.

The days of miracle are now gone, but I still feel that you would be of great help to us when you come to Delhi. After Bapu's [Mahatma Gandhi's] death, it is all the more essential that the remnant of his circle should pull its weight together and the counsels of each should be available to all. It is only because we are now looking at matters from too individualistic a point of view that there is so much lack of cohesion and discipline in the ranks of the Congress. More and more of collective thinking, as we used to have before, might put matters right, and I am sure both in this sphere as well as in administrative matters your advice would be most valuable.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Governor of West Bengal
Government House
Calcutta

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Camp Doon Court
Dehra Dun
4 June 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I got your letter of yesterday this morning. Since then, we had a telephonic conversation, and this is to confirm our conversation about Orissa. As Mahtab has agreed to accept our suggestion, I think we should stick to it, as it solves a double problem. In making the arrangement suggested by Rajaji, we would have to provide for Asaf Ali[1] somewhere else, and it is not easy.

2. About Rajaji's suggestion, we may consider the case later when the Madras appointment is to be made. I do not think Pakwasa will suit there, and we must await his own reactions in the matter. I think he is quite well settled, and I do not like disturbing our Governors so often.

3. Shuklaji also is now one of the candidates, as both he and [D. P.] Mishra feel that their province should get a chance. Besides, Shuklaji feels the pressure of age. Mishra has mellowed down by experience and is quite able to look after the province, but we shall consider these matters at a later stage when things are settled down.

4. I am not happy about UP affairs. Rafi is contesting the presidentship of the UP Provincial Congress Committee. He is very unwise; he should not do so, so long as he is a Minister in the Centre. His group probably feels that they have no other candidate who could defeat Tandonji. That may be true. It seems strange that all the Socialists are supporting Tandonji. The quarrel seems to be one of personal motive and not of principle. I am inviting Pantji to come down here, as Rajen Babu wants me to do so. Both of us are improving here, and Rajen Babu may go to Delhi probably next week.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

[1] Prominent Congressman of Delhi; Deputy Leader, Congress party in Central Legislature, 1945; Minister of Transport in Interim Government; Ambassador to US; Governor of Orissa

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New Delhi
3 June 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just returned from Ooty and I am told that someone is going soon to Dehra Dun. So I hasten to send you a few lines. I have not had time to look through my letters yet and probably there are some from you. I shall write more fully tomorrow.

I hope you are progressing at Dehra [Dun] and have resumed your short walks.

I have received a telegram from Mahtab in which he wholeheartedly agrees with my suggestions. I presume this is the one about Asaf Ali going to Orissa, but I should like to make sure after reference to other papers. I suppose we had better now fix up Katju for West Bengal and Asaf for Orissa.

Rajaji has just arrived. I met him at Palam. He mentioned that Munshi might go to Orissa as Munshi may not remain long in Hyderabad. I pass on the suggestion to you. I imagine that now that Asaf is approved of we might stick to that. But I shall await your reaction. I have not spoken to Asaf yet.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

273

New Delhi
19 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter of Sir Francis Mudie[1] which was intercepted by our Intelligence Bureau. You will notice what a fanatical well-wisher of Pakistan he is, and to what extent he is prepared to go in support of Pakistan. I wish we had amongst [us] some Europeans as zealous supporters

[1] ICS; Home Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1945; Governor of Sind, 1946-47; Governor of West Punjab in the Dominion of Pakistan, 1947-49

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of India as Mudie is of Pakistan. He has referred to Red Cross missions being despatched to Azad Kashmir and to your having ignored the telegrams on that subject. If you have ignored them deliberately, I entirely endorse your attitude.

It also seems that some publicity material is being prepared in West Punjab for the English market.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

28 March 1948

My dearest Baby,

. . . I don't know whether I told you that we were sending a Red X mission to "Azad Kashmir" (the territory held by the M. rebels). In name it is going from the Pakistan Red X, but it is from West Punjab Red X, of which S. is the Chairman, that is doing all the work. Consequently S. has been up to the eyes. There are an enormous number of details to be seen to and once she (?) starts she doesn't let up until it's finished. Fortunately, we are getting one "train" off tomorrow (Monday) and the next train off the following Monday. One is to be based on Rawalpindi and will work eastward into Poonch from there and the other is based on Jhelum and will work N-ward into Mirpur (a district of Jammu). We are to establish Red X hospitals in two places with Red Xs painted on the roofs, but it is rather doubtful if Nehru will respect them. He will try to argue that he does not recognise Azad Kashmir as a "belligerent," but it will be difficult . . . as a revised Geneva Convention has been drafted and agreed to by a representative of India (old style) though not possibly ratified.

Yours loving,
N.

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New Delhi
24 April 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

I wrote to you on 25 February 1948, about the position of the Congress Sewa Dal under the instructions which we have issued regarding banning of volunteer organisations indulging in

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drills, marches etc. of a semi-military character. Subsequently, Jugal Kishore also wrote to me, and he said that the matter would be placed before you when you came to Delhi. I shall be glad to know what the outcome has been.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

275

1 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi
11 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Please refer to your letters dated 25 February and 24 April, regarding the Congress Sewa Dal. I am very sorry that no earlier reply was sent partly because of my illness and partly because of my absence from Delhi.

I could appreciate the Government's position if it were to discriminate between the Congress Volunteer Organisation and other similar organisations indulging in drills, marches etc., of a semi-military character. There could be no discrimination if the method and the objective of the volunteer organisations are the same. But I submit that the Congress Volunteer Organisation stands on a completely different footing. The Congress has ever since 1920 accepted as a part of its creed non-violence and all organisations under it have to accept that creed. Therefore, there can be no comparison between the Congress organisation based on truth and non-violence and any other organisation which does not have a similar creed. Secondly, the Congress Sewa Dal does not indulge in drills, marches etc., of a semi-military character. It does give some exercises for the physical fitness of its members, but they are not intended to be and are not of a military character although elementary parade may be included in their routine. I will suggest that the Government should consider whether an organisation could be used for military or semi-military purposes and the ban should apply only if it could be so used. I submit that the Congress Sewa Dal cannot be so used. I do not think that it is necessary for the Congress to give an assurance to the Government that its entire structure, including that of the Sewa Dal, is based on non-violence. If any such assurance

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is needed I am prepared to give it. I hope therefore that the Government will not ban the Congress Volunteer Organisation.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar V. J. Patel

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Mussoorie
18 May 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Please refer to the attached correspondence with Rajen Babu regarding the Congress Sewa Dal. The Government of West Bengal have, I understand, placed a ban on the Congress Sewa Dal along with other volunteer organisations. I feel that a distinction between the Congress Volunteer Organisation and others can be made on the ground suggested by Rajen Babu, and if you agree, I would issue instructions accordingly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
20 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received a number of letters from you. You will forgive me if there is delay in answering them. I have been overwhelmed with work since my return. In any event I hope to see you soon. I propose to bring H. V. R. Iengar and Krishna Menon[1] with me to Mussoorie. Krishna Menon is here just for a week or ten days for consultations. But there are one or two points which I might deal with immediately.

About the report of a purse of Rs. 10 lakhs to be given to me at Coimbatore, I entirely agree with you. But I do not quite

[1] Secretary, India League, London, 1929-47; special Representative in London of Indian Government, 1946-47; High Commissioner, 1947-52; later Defence Minister; resigned from Nehru Cabinet in 1962 after Sino-Indian conflict

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know what to do in the matter if I am presented with purses at public meetings or otherwise. I received no information about this purse except a brief reference in a letter received this morning from the local Congress President.

Your letter of 18 May about the Congress Sewa Dal. I entirely agree with you and Rajendra Babu on this matter that there should be no ban on the Congress Sewa Dal. Indeed, I think the ban should be used sparingly and only on organisations known to be violent or communal. I am afraid our recent policy of banning organisations has had a very unfavourable reaction in foreign countries, including England.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
2 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am rather worried at the number of reports that I have received from various quarters about the recrudescence of the RSS in various forms and the growth of communal propaganda on their part. Unless this is dealt with at its very inception it may grow to dangerous proportions. The possible steps that we may have to take in regard to Hyderabad may well be affected by the communal situation. Therefore, it becomes even more necessary than otherwise for us to be vigilant in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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Mussoorie
4 May 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 2 May 1948 regarding the recrudescence of RSS activities.

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2. We have already warned Provincial Governments about this danger and have asked them to take all appropriate measures. We are doing so again. We ourselves have been ever-watchful in our Centrally Administered areas and have not allowed, as far as possible, anything which would have any resemblance to usual RSS activities. Recently, you must have noticed we banned drill of military or semi-military type, in addition to the ban on the organisation which already exists.

3. The main difficulty, however, is that in some provinces, the High Courts have been acquitting persons who were arrested in connection with the round-up of RSS men. In UP there have been several acquittals; in Bombay, the acquittals have been of an almost wholesale nature and the Government has been asked to pay costs. If we take extra powers to deal with such a situation, we are charged with attacking civil liberties. I am writing this merely to emphasise our difficulties, though, as you say, it is even more necessary than otherwise to be vigilant.

4. In this connection, I should like to mention that reports have reached me of considerable discontent both amongst the public, in general, and refugees, in particular, in regard to our failure to prevent the inflow of Muslims from Pakistan. The matter was to have been discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 30 April. I have not yet seen the minutes of that meeting and I do not know what transpired. I have, however, seen the correspondence which passed between Dharma Vira and Sachdev, in which certain measures were settled regarding check on mass exodus of Muslims from Pakistan. I am doubtful whether those measures in themselves would suffice. Rajen Babu had a talk with me today. He has also had a talk with you. It seems that Muslims, in order to escape from Pakistan, are following all sorts of devious ways to return to India. The deputation of Jamiat-ul-Ulema which went to Pakistan seems to have given encouragement to this movement of Muslims. I feel that our approach to this problem should be more positive and not merely negative. I have a strong feeling that the poor treatment given to refugees in Pakistan is deliberate, in order that Pakistan may thereby be rid of the refugee problem at the expense of India. I also feel that, having regard to Ghulam Mohammad's attitude at the Inter-Dominion Conference in Calcutta which was reported to me, the return of Muslims to India is receiving active encouragement and support from the Pakistan Government. If our approach to this problem is not quick, definite and determined, we are apt to find ourselves in

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much more serious difficulties than the problem of refugees gave rise to during the last few months. Return of these Muslims, while we are not yet able to rehabilitate Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan and are unable to return any of them back to Pakistan, would create considerable discontent and dissatisfaction not only amongst the refugees, but also amongst the general public, and it would be this discontent which would again be the breeding ground of communal poison, on which activities of organisations like the RSS thrive.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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4 King Edward Road
New Delhi
17 July 1948

My dear Sardarji,

You will be meeting the Provincial Premiers today to discuss various matters concerning internal security and administration. May I take the liberty to draw your attention to some matters which I have no doubt you have also considered?

1. Our attitude towards RSS and Hindu Mahasabha:

It is now clear that the plot to murder Gandhiji was confined to a small group of persons mainly in Maharashtra. Here also there are many people even connected with the Hindu Mahasabha who are entirely outside the influence of this group. Time has now, therefore, come to set at liberty all persons against whom there is no evidence of complicity or of participation in subversive activities. In some provinces even properties of Hindu Sabha members have been attached and other restrictions have been imposed for which there can be no justification.

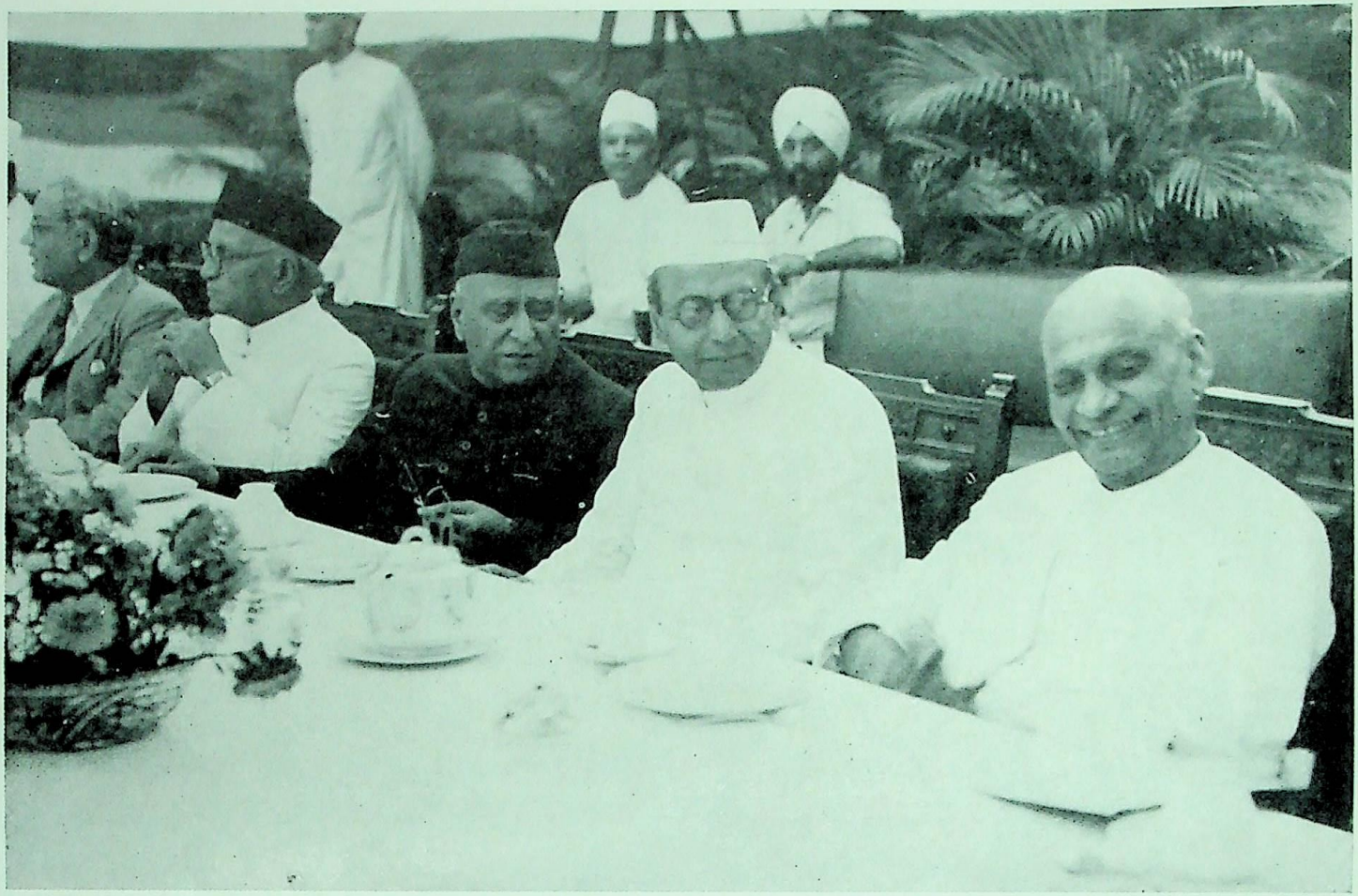
Regarding RSS no evidence is forthcoming to show that the organisation as such had anything to do with any widespread subversive movement or with any plot to murder political leaders. In some provinces RSS boys have been treated as criminals of the worst type and have been denied the usual amenities which political prisoners have all along been given.

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PATEL BEING RECEIVED AT CUTTACK AIRPORT. ON HIS RIGHT IS K. N. KATJU, GOVERNOR OF ORISSA, AND ON HIS LEFT HAREKRUSHNA MAHTAB, PREMIER

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BOMBAY PREMIER B. G. KHER GAVE A RECEPTION TO THE ACTING PM, SARDAR PATEL, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 74TH BIRTHDAY, ON 31 OCTOBER 1948, ON THE LAWNS OF COUNCIL HALL, BOMBAY. TO THE SARDAR'S RIGHT ARE B. G. KHER, KUNWAR MAHARAJ SINGH, GOVERNOR, AND JIVRAJ MEHTA, FINANCE MINISTER

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Regarding the future, I do feel that the time has now come when leaders of all Hindu organisations should be contacted and efforts should be made to canalise their activities into lines which will best serve our national interest. Aggressive communalism which denies elementary rights to classes of Indian citizens merely on consideration of religion is certainly disastrous. But this does not mean that we must crush all Hindu feelings in India. The future is somewhat dark for us. If there is trouble between India and Pakistan or between India and Hyderabad, or if there are repercussions within India, it is obvious that the main supporting force of Government will be the goodwill of the vast majority of non-Muslim population, who should be spontaneously roused to our aid. It is of utmost importance that in spite of political differences between party and party, a general atmosphere of stability and confidence amongst Hindus should be steadily promoted. Hindus holding strong views on the need for saving India from passing under Muslim rule or other foreign rule should not be dubbed as fascists or conspirators. Let us by all means do everything we can to impress upon the people of India that by adoption of subversive activities or political terrorism no section of the people can ever help to strengthen India. For this purpose we need not hound out of public life every individual or organisation owing allegiance to Hindu ideals or culture, or to the need for consolidating Hindus.

2. Our attitude towards Communists:

The subtle way in which they are undermining security and authority today is obvious. There can and should be no compromise with Communists. Unless they are put down completely in every sphere of activity, specially labour, we shall have to face disastrous consequences. Their mode of work is most subtle. The way in which they send their agents to every sphere of work must be scrutinised by the authorities. I hope you will issue clear and emphatic directions for the suppression of Communist activities in all fronts.

3. Our attitude towards Muslims:

As you have yourself declared repeatedly, we have nothing against those Muslims who generally accept India as their motherland and identify themselves with her interests. But the fact remains to be tested whether the vast majority of Muslims who were until a year ago fanatic adherents to Muslim League and Pakistan, have really changed their attitude. By allowing strong Muslim pockets to be created in different parts of India we shall

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be sowing the seeds of our own destruction. We very often forget the past by some smooth and shallow talks in which some Muslims now in India indulge, declaring their outward loyalty to India. I feel we are not taking sufficiently strong action to watch their activities and guard against any open or secret revolt organised by them. The recent Bombay disturbances constituted a glaring example in this connection. How is it that Muslims who constitute such a small minority in Bombay, dared attack and killed so many Hindus? This shows that while we are capable of taking strong action in weakening or suppressing every Hindu front, we are unable to deal with the activities of Muslims. This is a matter which, I know, is already engaging your attention and I hope you will now issue directions which should be followed on an all-India basis. Without making any declaration, we need not go out of our way in placing Muslims in key positions specially where questions of security are involved.

4. Strengthening of Home Guards and volunteer organisations:

If there is any serious trouble in the near future our aim should be to secure internal order with the help of resources available within the provinces. The army should not, if possible, be used for this purpose; it will be required for action elsewhere. From this point of view every province should strengthen volunteer organisations which will work under the auspices of Government. Such organisations will function in addition to police and Home Guard forces. So passionate is the anxiety of the general public to serve and save our newly-won freedom that I have not the least doubt that lakhs will enrol themselves on a voluntary basis if a proper call goes to the people without raising any issue of party domination or provincialism.

5. Provincialism:

It is tragic to find that in various parts of India a wave of provincialism is moving the minds of many people. This has to be immediately put down, for this contains the germs of our destruction. This will be worse than communalism. History will repeat itself and we shall lose our country if we allow disruptive tendencies to become powerful and block the road to national unity. Very often these tendencies thrive because of the direct or indirect support they receive at the hands of the authorities themselves. It is no use trying to crush any ideologies by force. Wherever there are grievances they have to be removed. But this is a matter which requires our urgent consideration before it becomes too late. We usually take strong action against the

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Press and individuals for communal reasons. But we are allowing worst passions to be roused amongst sections of people, arising out of caste prejudices or provincial feelings.

I feel sorry to trouble you with this long letter. But I felt it was my duty to place my viewpoint before you, so that you might take such action on the points I have mentioned, in course of your discussions with the Provincial Premiers.

May I come and see you some time tomorrow?

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Minister for Home Affairs
New Delhi

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New Delhi
18 July 1948

My dear Syama Prasad,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July 1948 about the meeting with Provincial Premiers.

As regards the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha, the case relating to Gandhiji's murder is sub judice and I should not like to say anything about the participation of the two organisations, but our reports do confirm that, as a result of the activities of these two bodies, particularly the former, an atmosphere was created in the country in which such a ghastly tragedy became possible. There is no doubt in my mind that the extreme section of the Hindu Mahasabha was involved in this conspiracy. The activities of the RSS constituted a clear threat to the existence of Government and the State. Our reports show that those activities, despite the ban, have not died down. Indeed, as time has marched on, the RSS circles are becoming more defiant and are indulging in their subversive activities in an increasing measure. The number of persons arrested is not large; it is just above 500 throughout India. This would show that generally only those are in detention whose release is prejudicial to security. Almost all of them would be due for automatic release next month or so when the period of six months for which it is possible to keep under the various public safety measures will have expired. It is not necessary or desirable to anticipate that event by a fortnight

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or three weeks. The Premiers are fully alive to the necessity of diverting the enthusiasm and zeal of these persons into more useful channels. I am sure they will take steps to that end.

As regards Communists, here again, both we and the Provincial Governments realise the extent and dangers of the problem and have reached certain decisions how best to tackle it.

As regards Muslims, I entirely agree with you as to the dangerous possibilities inherent in the presence in India of a section of disloyal elements. Here also, we are taking such measures as we can consistent with the needs of security and the secular nature of our State.

The problem of Home Guards and volunteer organisations was also discussed yesterday. The provinces seem to have attained a substantial measure of success already and seem to be going ahead on satisfactory lines.

Regarding the last point viz. provincialism, I am afraid there is little that Government can do. Many of us realise the dangers involved but the problem seems to be "who should bell the cat?"

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

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Camp Doon Court
Dehra Doon
27 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

In the Cabinet meeting of 30 April the question of constitutional provisions in relation to Services has been put down for discussion. I need hardly say how important and essential it is that such provisions are inserted in our Constitution. The Indian Independence Act already carries a provision regarding terms and conditions of existing members of the ICS, IP and other Secretary of State's Services. In consultation with and with the unanimous support of provincial Governments we have evolved two new Services to take the place of the ICS and the IP viz. the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service. We have made recruitments, have issued rules of re-

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cruitment, discipline, control etc., and have entered into agreements with candidates for these Services. In fact, the second batch of probationers has already joined the Indian Administrative Services Training School, and we are well on the way to start a school for the training of Indian Police Service candidates. The draft constitution does not provide for an all-India Service of this type. We will, therefore, have to make provision for these Services as well in the new Constitution.

2. I need hardly emphasise that an efficient and disciplined and contented service, assured of its prospects as a result of diligent and honest work, is a sine qua non of sound administration under a democratic regime even more than under an authoritarian rule. The service must be above party and we should ensure that political considerations either in its recruitment or in its discipline and control are reduced to the minimum, if not eliminated altogether. At the same time, I fully appreciate the importance of ensuring that the Services are amenable to the control and discipline of Ministers, both provincial and Central. This is all the more important in an all-India Service where it is obvious that recruitment, discipline and control etc. have to be tackled on a basis of uniformity and under the directions of the Central Government which is the recruiting agency. This consideration has already influenced us in evolving the rules and regulations for the existing IAS and IPS which have been settled in consultation with provincial Governments and which, by providing provincial Ministers control in certain comparatively minor but not at all negligible matters, have made due allowance for the prestige and powers of provincial Ministers. You will recall that all these matters have been settled at a conference of Prime Ministers convened in 1946 and the details have been settled by correspondence with provincial Governments. No criticism can, therefore, be made that either in the formation of these Services, or in the preparation of necessary rules and regulations, provincial susceptibilities and views find no place. Indeed, there was a remarkable unanimity between the views of the provincial Governments and those of the Central Government throughout on these questions. Any pricking of the conscience on the score of provincial autonomy or on the need for sustaining the prestige and powers of provincial Ministers is, therefore, out of place.

3. I am also convinced (and I hope my colleagues will support me in this) that it would be a grave mistake to leave these

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matters to be regulated either by Central or provincial legislation. Constitutional guarantees and safeguards are the best medium of providing for these Services and are likely to prove more lasting. On the other hand, if we leave matters to be regulated by Central or provincial legislation, the chances of interference with the Services and seriously prejudicing their efficiency on account of the interaction of Central and provincial politics are closer. Moreover, in regard to the existing Services there is both a moral and a legal obligation on our part to ensure that their conditions are not prejudicially affected by any future legislation. You will recall that during our negotiations over the transfer of the Secretary of State's Services to our control, considerable emphasis was laid on this aspect of the case and, indeed, it was on a clear understanding from us that we would see that the rights and conditions of service of the existing members of the Secretary of State's Services are not prejudicially affected but are fully safeguarded that the British Government agreed to exclude Indians on the compensation scheme. I feel we are in honour bound to carry out that undertaking and the only way that undertaking can be fully and satisfactorily discharged is to make provision in the Constitution itself.

4. I should be grateful if you and other colleagues of mine would approach the subject from the general background given by me in this letter. The detailed proposals will be explained, if necessary, by the representatives of the Home Ministry, at the meeting of the Cabinet. I have already had the benefit of a short discussion with Dr. Ambedkar who, I hope, will be able to clarify the legal aspect of the case. I am sorry that much against my wishes I have to be away from the discussion of such important issues, but I know I can leave matters in your safe hands. This knowledge helps to sustain me in my present situation and lightens the mental burden which I am undoubtedly carrying with me at this distance.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
27 April 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I returned from Bombay this afternoon after spending four very strenuous days there. I feel tired and worn out. But immediately on arrival here I have to face a host of difficult problems.

2. Among them there is something new—Ambedkar's recent speech in Lucknow. You must have seen this in the newspapers. There is a somewhat fuller report of it in the National Herald of 26 April. I just do not see how Ambedkar can continue as a Minister in our Cabinet after this speech. I am writing a letter to him, a copy of which I enclose.

3. There is so much that seems to me wrong that I do not know how and where to begin. On top of all this, most people's nerves are in a bad way due to overwork and perhaps heat. I have just received a letter from [K. C.] Neogy which is needlessly aggressive simply because of some minor decision of the Cabinet in regard to the Rehabilitation Board. As a matter of fact the Cabinet did not come to any decision at all, but elucidated a previous decision about the autonomy of the Board, and postponed further consideration to the next meeting when Neogy was likely to be present.

4. Dr. Bidhan Roy is here. I do not know what to do about Bengal and have requested Rajendra Babu to deal with the matter. I agree with you entirely that we cannot impose a decision on West Bengal and the party there will have to decide. But in any event, as in the Punjab, it is almost a 50 : 50 affair and whatever the decision, an unstable ministry results. In West Bengal, as in East Punjab, Ministers have joined in the requisition for a change of Ministry. This is a very improper practice. If a minister feels that way he must resign first.

5. I think it would be worthwhile for you to give Rs. 10,000 to Bidhan Roy for helping workers in East Bengal. If Bidhan ceases to be Premier, the money can be given to his successor.

6. One odd factor in the situation in West Bengal is that some of the prominent persons concerned are from East Bengal, such as

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Surendra Mohan Ghosh, not to mention Kiran Shankar Roy. I had a brief talk with Prafulla Babu in Bombay, and he seemed to think that the only way out of the difficulty was to have a new Ministry, jointly formed by him and Surendra Mohan Ghosh, one of the two being Premier. Perhaps this might be done. But even that Ministry is not likely to have too long a life. At the present moment it is rather doubtful which way a majority lies.

7. I feel your absence greatly. There are so many serious problems cropping up continually about which I would like to consult you. Apart from this there is the question of the ministries specifically under your charge. You will be issuing directions to them no doubt from day to day on important matters. Nevertheless, your absence will make them rather loose. In the States Ministry, V. P. Menon is frequently touring. In the Home Ministry Banerjee is far from satisfactory. In Information and Broadcasting Bhalja has apparently just taken charge. I do not know if you can suggest some procedure for these Ministries so that while important references should be made to you, some minister here can be kept in more intimate touch with them. Gopalaswami will be back in a day or two.

8. I received a number of letters from you today. One of them dealt with the possibility of our inviting journalists from the Middle East to India. I shall investigate that.

9. After Gopalaswami's return we shall have to send some formal reply to the Security Council about Kashmir. Also to send more definite instructions about Junagadh.

10. As for appointing a Joint High Commissioner at Dacca, Prafulla Babu might agree. But now owing to the possible change in the Ministry in West Bengal, everything is in a melting pot.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
27 April 1948

My dear Dr. Ambedkar,

On my return to Delhi this afternoon I read a report of your speech recently delivered in Lucknow before the UP Scheduled Castes Conference. I must confess that I was surprised and distressed to read this speech. It

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raises certain rather fundamental matters about the functioning of the Cabinet and its members. There is an attack in it on individuals as well as on the Congress as such, and an appeal for bringing about divisions in the Congress ranks. There is a further appeal for the functioning of a purely communal political organisation which, I should have thought, is opposed to the recent declaration of policy by the Government in regard to such communal political organisations.

2. You are further reported to have said as follows:

> "There has been a large number of fifth columnists in our ranks and only when we expose them and strengthen ourselves will we be able to replace Nehru and Patel in a matter of days."

3. There are many other passages of your speech as reported which seem very odd to me as coming from a Cabinet Minister. But I shall not quote them here.

4. We have welcomed your co-operation in the Government and in the Constituent Assembly and attached value to the work you have done. I am not aware of any occasion when any of my colleagues or I have done anything which might be termed discourtesy to you. I had hoped that this co-operation would grow and that we would continue to benefit by your advice and work.

5. Your speech, however, is such that I can hardly imagine any Cabinet Minister being responsible for it. It is an attack on the Congress which is responsible for the present government, it is an attack on the Premier of the United Provinces and the UP Government, and it is an attack on me as Prime Minister and on the Deputy Prime Minister. You state clearly, if you are reported aright, that it is your purpose to push us out. Your reference to fifth columnists presumably means our colleague Jagjivan Ram as well as those who think with him. If these views had been expressed by you in private to us, the situation would have been embarrassing enough for both you and me. It is doubly embarrassing when public statements have been made. If ministers feel and speak in this way there is no Cabinet responsibility left. The Prime Minister might as well shut up shop.

6. I am not writing any more to you on this subject except to point out to you the serious consequences of the speech you are reported to have made. There can hardly be any co-operation or common working on that basis. I should be grateful to you if you let me know if the report is a correct one.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

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New Delhi
1 May 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

Please refer to your letter dated 29 April 1948. I had already received a letter from the Prime Minister enquiring as to the text of my speech which I delivered at Lucknow on 25 April. I have in my letter of 28 April 1948, in reply to his letter, given him the full outline of what I said at Lucknow. I think I cannot do better than send you a copy of that letter for your perusal. You will see how perverted was the Press report. Speaking for myself, I have no hesitation in saying that no fair-minded man could have any objection to anything I said at Lucknow.

I hope you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
B. R. Ambedkar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
28 April 1948

My dear Pandit Nehru,

Please refer to your letter of 27 April 1948 in which you have expressed your reactions to my speech at the conference of the Scheduled Castes Federation held in Lucknow on 25 April. I have not seen any newspaper report of my speech. I don't know which newspaper report you have seen. I am, therefore, unable to check up the report point by point. Unfortunately, my speech at the conference was not a written speech. It was delivered extempore. But I can give you the points I made in my speech. They were all intended to meet the criticism that has been levelled against me by some of my own followers on various counts.

I. Why I am silent ever since the departure of the Cabinet Mission.

II. Why I joined the Congress Government.

III. What I propose to do in the future.

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In reply to I, I said

The Scheduled Castes Federation demanded political safeguards—the most important of which was separate electorates. If the results of the primary elections were taken as the test, there was no doubt that the whole of the Scheduled Castes were behind this demand. Notwithstanding this, our demand was turned down by the Cabinet Mission. This was because of two reasons (1) we were a weaker party as compared with the Muslims and the Sikhs, and (2) we were divided in our ranks which contained many fifth columnists. The decision of the Cabinet Mission seemed to wipe out the Scheduled Castes as a separate political entity and that without political safeguards the Scheduled Castes appeared to me to be doomed. There was a complete darkness before me. That is the reason why I have not made any statement.

In reply to II, I said

It is true I have been an opponent and a critic of the Congress. At the same time I don't believe in opposition for the sake of opposition. There ought to be the spirit of co-operation where we can gain something by co-operation. I thought there would be no use fighting with the Congress. I, therefore, decided to co-operate and by co-operation we got some safeguards in the Constitution which we might not otherwise have got, and gave some instances to substantiate my argument. With regard to my joining the Cabinet, I said there were two reasons which prevailed upon me to accept the offer—(1) the offer was without any condition, (2) one could serve the interests of the Scheduled Castes better from within the Government than from without. I said that the Scheduled Castes had no fear of bad laws being made to their prejudice. What they had to fear about was bad administration. This bad administration was due to the absence of men belonging to the Scheduled Castes in the administration. The administration was unsympathetic to the Scheduled Castes, because it was manned wholly by Caste Hindu officers, who were partial to the Caste Hindus in the villages, who exacted begar from the Scheduled Castes and practised upon them tyranny and oppression day in and day out. This tyranny and oppression could be averted only if more of the Scheduled Castes could find a place in the Civil Service. This can be done better by being inside the Government rather than remaining outside.

In regard to III, I said

There is no use joining the Congress. Safety lies in having two parties. There must be an opposition to criticise Government. Government may otherwise easily become a dictatorship. It is a house which is burning. There are many inside the Congress who want to form an opposition, the necessity of which they feel quite strongly. Secondly, the Congress itself is getting divided. The Socialists have gone out of it. How big they will grow one cannot say now. There are possibilities of their getting quite big. Hereafter there will be two parties (1) Congress, and (2) Socialists—and the question is not whether we

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should join the Congress. The question is whether we should join the Congress or the Socialists. I said that my advice is that you should form a third party so that the Scheduled Castes may be able to hold the balance and thereby obtain bargaining power. There is no use joining any political party as its mere camp-followers. If it gives anything, it merely gives office. It cannot give power.

Your conference has just now passed a resolution condemning the Pant Government for giving you only 10 per cent reservation in the Services when on a purely population basis you are entitled to something like 22 per cent. The reason why Mr. Pant does not give you your full quota is because for his majority in the UP Assembly; he is not dependent upon you. When he becomes dependent upon you—and that can be only when you are united into a separate organisation worthy of negotiation—you can demand 22 per cent, and he will have to give it to you.

I then turned to the question of unity between the Scheduled Castes and the so-called Backward Classes. This I did at the request of the leaders of the Backward Classes who were present at the conference. I said it was a pity that the two classes whose needs were common did not join together. The reason was that the Backward Classes did not like to associate themselves with the Scheduled Castes, because they were afraid that such an association will bring themselves down to the level of the Scheduled Castes. I said that I was not anxious to establish inter-dining and inter-marriage between the Scheduled Castes and the Backward Classes. They may well remain separate social entities. There is no reason why they should not join hands to form a political party to remove their backward condition. I pointed out how the Scheduled Castes have improved their condition by playing their part in the politics of the country, and there is no reason why the Backward Classes should not do the same. I said that the Scheduled Castes and the Backward Classes form the majority of the population of this country. There is no reason why they should not rule this country. All that is necessary is to organise for the purpose of capturing political power—which is your own because of adult suffrage. People do not seem to buck up courage because they are overwhelmed by the belief that Congress Government is there for ever. I said this is a wrong impression. In popular democracy no government is permanent and not even the government established by the two of the tallest Congressmen, Pandit Jawaharlal and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. If you organise you can even capture that Government.

I have given you as detailed an account and as accurate an account of what I said as I can recall.

You will allow me to say that I never speak in a desultory manner. Whether I make a written or an oral speech, I always speak on some definite points. These are the only three points on which I spoke at Lucknow.

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With regard to the observations you have made on my speech, I would like to draw your attention to the following—

(i) There was no hostility to the Congress. In fact I justified my co-operation with the Congress and did not exclude the possibility of aligning with the Congress under the new Constitution.

(ii) There was no reference to any member of the present Government. The reference I made to you and to Sardar Patel was far from being derogatory. It was quite complimentary.

(iii) There was not the remotest reference to the present Cabinet either for its acts of commission or omission.

With regard to your point that I am advocating communal organisation, you have probably forgotten the discussion that took place in the Cabinet over the resolution on communal organisation. I then pointed out that so long as the Scheduled Castes have been granted political safeguards, it is incumbent upon them to form their own political organisation to see that the safeguards do not become nugatory. You then accepted the substantiality of this point and referred to it in your reply to the mover of the resolution in the Assembly.

I appreciate what you say about Cabinet responsibility. I venture to say that no member has observed it more scrupulously than I have done. You will allow me to say that on most of the questions that have come before the Cabinet, I have had my own independent opinions which have been different from yours. Some of them were very vital and about which I have felt greatly disturbed. Notwithstanding this, I have not made any single statement either to the Press or to the public. In fact, I have refused invitations to address meetings just because of the feeling that I may have to say something unpleasant about the Government. In fact, I have been the most silent member of the present Government. This silence is deliberate and self-imposed only to maintain Cabinet responsibility.

With regard to your statement that I was attempting to turn you and the Deputy Prime Minister out of office, all I can say is that if you advert to the relevant part of my speech as I have given above, you yourself will see that any such suggestion is fantastic. The point at which the reference to you and the Sardar occurs is general and the reference to you and the Sardar is by way of illustration only. There is no plot, there is not even an idea which has any foundation in personal ambition. Besides the whole of that part of the speech relates to the future elections under the new Constitution. It has not the remotest reference to the present Government. The Press has never been kind to me. It has always done its best to twist facts and phrases, take them out of their context and pervert the sense of anything I have said. I fear this is what has happened to my speech at Lucknow. I, therefore, hope

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that my version—which though broad is yet untarnished—will give you a correct idea of what I said.

Yours sincerely,
B. R. Ambedkar

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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Camp Mussoorie
6 May 1948

My dear Dr. Ambedkar,

Thank you for your letter of 1 May. I myself was shocked to read the reported version of your speech and was rather chary of believing that it was a correct report. It was for this reason that I waited for a day, in case you contradicted it. I wrote to you only when no contradiction came out the next day. I am glad to know that my first reaction is correct and that your version of the speech is so different from the published version. I can assure you that none of us desires that you should leave Government. Personally, I would be the last person to desire it. Gadgil has given me your message, and I have told him that there is no question of any embarrassment, and that I should like you to stay on in Government. I am sure that you will find, in co-operation with the Congress, the best means of safeguarding the interests of the Scheduled Castes. Of course, should you feel that the Congress is at any time acting detrimental to those interests, it is open to you to part company.

2. I also agree with you that so far as legislation is concerned the Scheduled Castes have nothing to fear and that their fears are legitimate in regard to administrative matters. There also, however, I feel convinced that, generally speaking, those who are in charge of administration are becoming more and more sympathetic and that, with the increasing inclusion of men from the Scheduled Castes in the administrative sphere, that sympathy would keep on growing. There also you can secure improvement more by co-operation than in opposition. I am glad to notice that this sentiment finds a place in your speech.

3. I am now feeling much better and am progressively taking more active interest and part in public affairs. I hope in a few weeks' time I shall be quite normal.

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With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
Minister for Law
New Delhi

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New Delhi
10 May 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

Thank you for your letter of 6 May 1948. I greatly appreciate the spirit in which it has been written.

I am happy to learn of the progress you are making in your health.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
B. R. Ambedkar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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New Delhi
5 May 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

In continuation of my letter of 1 May 1948, I am enclosing herewith a copy of my reply to the Prime Minister to a further letter from him dated 30 April 1948. As desired by the Prime Minister, I am awaiting to discuss the matter with him. I trust you will keep this correspondence secret and personal to you.

I hope you are feeling better.

Yours sincerely,
B. R. Ambedkar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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ENCLOSURE

My dear Pandit Nehru,

Please refer to your Secret and Personal letter of 30 April 1948. I regret very much my inability to acknowledge it immediately. Your letter fell in my hands late in the evening on Saturday. As you know, on the following Sunday, Monday and Tuesday I was busy with the Inter-Dominion Conference on water rights. However, I did give effect immediately to your suggestion of issuing a statement to the Press. My statement appeared on Monday, which I hope you have seen.

I had not seen my speech as reported in the National Herald of Lucknow until you kindly sent me a cutting. All I can say is that the representative of this paper could not have distorted my speech in a manner worse than he has done. I delivered my speech in Hindustani, which is not my mother tongue. It is, therefore, possible for misreporting and misrepresenting the intention of the speaker. Added to this, the Press in India has had its knife in me for the last 25 years. Consequently, deliberate perversions of my speeches by the Press have occurred many a time. I am not surprised what has occurred now. You can well recall how you yourself have been the victim of such misrepresentation in regard to your speech on Hyderabad delivered in Bombay at the last AICC meeting. I may point out that that part of my speech in which I justified my co-operation with the Congress has not been reported, and it is this omission which has been responsible for creating the misunderstanding.

I agree that the speech as reported may create in the public mind such impressions as you have referred to in your letter. But I hope that the statement I have issued will remove such impressions. If, however, you still feel embarrassed by my speech and that vis-a-vis the Congress party your position has become indefensible, I feel that the proper remedy for relieving you of your embarrassment is for me to offer you my resignation of my office as Law Minister of the Government of India. You perhaps know that to me politics have never been a game. It is a mission. I have spent all my life and sacrificed all my personal prospects to help the Scheduled Castes in their betterment. I am grateful to you for your invitation to join your Cabinet and I am conscious that the acceptance of the invitation carries with it certain limitations. But whatever limitations have to be accepted, I can never surrender my right to advise my people what is the best course for them to follow. I may add that in a coalition Government, members of different groups or parties are free to tender advice to their party in such a manner as they think fit so long

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as they do not impair the integrity of the Government of the day of which they are members.

You would, I imagine, prefer my not replying to your letter in any greater detail but to discuss the matter with you as desired by you. If you will fix up the day and the time at your convenience, I shall be glad to call on you. I have no important engagements till the 9th.

Yours sincerely,
B. R. Ambedkar

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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New Delhi
5 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received a sheaf of letters from you today.

I want very much to go to Mussoorie to discuss various matters with you. But I fear I cannot do so till some time after the 22nd of this month. I had a talk with Rajendra Babu and provisionally I have fixed 24 May for my visit to Mussoorie. I shall try to have two days there. Work here accumulates so much that it is difficult to run away from it.

About Muslims coming to India from Pakistan, the matter is undoubtedly serious. So far as large numbers are concerned, I believe this relates to the Meos. I do not think that any policy discussion is necessary on this subject as there is general agreement that this inflow should not be encouraged. The real question is how to do it. We have issued instructions to all the parties concerned to discourage this. Even the train service which was to have run between Lahore and Amritsar has been postponed. There is little traffic between West Punjab and East Punjab of this kind now, except stray people who may come across. But there is considerable traffic, I believe, on the Sind-Rajputana border. People come by roundabout ways. The only real way of stopping them is to guard effectively the long North-West frontier of Rajputana.

About Frank Anthony, no one has ever thought of him as the Governor of Madras.

We have to come to swift decisions about:

(1) Governor of Bengal,

(2) Governor of Madras,

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(3) Ambassador in Washington,

(4) Deputy High Commissioner in East Bengal.

I confess that I find great difficulty in selecting persons for these offices. Mountbatten has been pressing me to let Katju go to Calcutta as suggested by Rajaji and Bidhan Roy. You and I had reacted against this proposal and, of course, Mahtab did likewise. But I am beginning to think that perhaps stress of circumstances might force us to ask Katju.

We have had some very odd news from our office in Karachi about RAF planes coming to Karachi and going on to Hyderabad in some numbers, presumably carrying arms. It is a little difficult to verify this. If there is any truth at all in it, it is a very serious matter.

I have not met Dr. Ambedkar, but I wrote to him at length and you must have received a copy of my letter. It was because I wrote to him that he issued a Press statement. This Press statement has not been received well by the Press or by others. I feel, however, that we should not insist on anything more from him. I intend having a talk with him also.

My programme is:

9 to 11 May—Kashmir,

13 to 17 May—Mashobra,

24 and 25 May—Mussoorie,

28 May—Gwalior,

31 to 3 June—Ootacamund.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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CHAPTER XI

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY PRESIDENTSHIP

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New Delhi
19 November 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

This morning in the Working Committee we talked about the Constituent Assembly and about the presidentship of it. I have been giving further thought to this matter, and a report I had of today's proceedings has made me think still more furiously.

It is clear that Rajendra Babu will be unable, owing to his ill-health, to take any effective part in these final stages. It is clear also that it would be unfair to cause this heavy burden to fall on Dr. [Syama Prasad] Mookerjee who has not got much experience of this kind. If we are to carry on, as we are doing, this means not only enormous delay but also confusion and possibly even wrong decisions. Many people will take less and less interest in the proceedings, and during our absence odd decisions will be taken which we might consider unfortunate.

Therefore, I feel that we cannot allow matters to drift and we must be bold enough to take a step. The only step that I can think of is the appointment of a new permanent President. Rajendra Babu has already written to you on this subject and expressed a desire to resign. I think he was right in doing so, and he will appreciate any step that we may take in furtherance of his idea. I suggest to you, therefore, that you might explain this situation to him and agree with him that, in the circumstances, it is unfortunately necessary for us to accept the fact that he cannot come and to make other suitable arrangements.

On Rajendra Babu's resignation, we should go ahead with the election of Mavalankar. There can be no other person both from the point of view of competence and from the fact that normally the same person should preside over the two different aspects of the Constituent Assembly.

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If you agree with this, I hope you will write to Rajendra Babu. If you prefer you can consult other colleagues before you take this step.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
5 December 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

You will remember that the Governor-General wrote to you on the question of his own salary. This letter was referred to me by you. Some days ago I wrote to the G.G. suggesting that his salary might be fixed at Rs. 5,500 per month, as in the Constitution, but that this salary should be free of income-tax. I do not, as a general rule, like anyone's salary being free of income-tax. But I think it would be fit and proper for the Head of State to be given this privilege. This, I believe, is the general rule in other countries. This would fit in with our constitutional provision and, at the same time, give the G.G. something that will be just barely adequate for his normal expenses.

Rajaji was at first inclined to think that the salary might be reduced to Rs. 10,000 or so without any provision about income-tax. But after some discussion with me, he agreed to my proposal. I suggest that this matter might also be put up before the Cabinet.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
7 December 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 5 December 1948 regarding the salary for the Governor-General. I agree that the salary should be fixed at Rs. 5,500 per month free of income-tax. If you would

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kindly send me the correspondence which you had with him, we would put up a summary to the Cabinet and get the proposal approved.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
6 December 1948

My dear General Cariappa,

I have just returned from Gwalior and hasten to extend to you my warmest congratulations and best wishes on your appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army. For the first time the Indian Army will have the pride and satisfaction of having an Indian at the head of its command, and I am sure you will obtain the fullest loyalty and support from all the officers and ranks under you.

Your record and achievements inspire our confidence in your ability to lead your men at such a critical period of the country's history and I can assure you that we on our part will extend to you all goodwill and co-operation in the discharge of your onerous responsibilities.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Lt-Gen. K. M. Cariappa[1]
GOC-in-C
Western Command
New Delhi

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New Delhi
10 December 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

On my return from Jammu last evening I received your very kind letter of congratulations on my new appointment. I thank you very much for your good wishes. I assure you that I will

[1] GOC-in-C, Western Command, 1947; Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army, 1949-53

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give my very best at all times to justify the confidence you and our Government have placed in me in appointing me for this very important command. It is a sacred duty which I will endeavour to carry out to the best of my ability to serve my country well. I feel so encouraged with the thought that I have in you an understanding, sympathetic and helpful personage to make my very onerous and exacting responsibility an easy one to cope with.

May I please be permitted to take this opportunity to thank you very very much for having given your consent as our Deputy Prime Minister in the making of this choice? May God keep you in good health for very long years to come to give us all the guidance and directions which we so badly require at this critical period in the history of our country to enable us to serve our Government and our people well.

With respectful regards,

Yours very sincerely,
K. M. Cariappa

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
7 December 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I told you two or three days ago that I had received a complaint from a Member of the Constituent Assembly about Syama Prasad Mookerjee's tendency to employ Bengalis and Jairamdas Doulatram's tendency to employ Sindhis in their respective departments. I sent on this complaint to Syama Prasad and Jairamdas. They have sent me replies. I enclose copies of these.

In Syama Prasad's letter a suggestion is made that a statement should be called for from all Ministries showing a complete list of appointments made in all Ministries since 15 August 1947 and the procedure adopted in each case. Also the percentage of persons belonging to various provinces. Perhaps it would be desirable to ask for this information. If you agree, the Home Ministry might issue a secret circular to this effect.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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ENCLOSURE I

Delhi
2 December 1948

My dear Panditji,

I received today your letter of the 1st relating to the complaint of a Member of the [Constituent] Assembly about my appointing Sindhis. I am thankful to you for writing to me about it as I was told that attempts would be made to prejudice your mind. Some time ago I could not on merits give promotion to a friend of a Member of the Constituent Assembly whom I had looked upon as a person with a sense of responsibility. The disappointed Government servant then used this Member to carry on whispering propaganda about my appointing only Sindhis in my department.

The facts are that owing to the departure of European and Muslim employees and other vacancies there have been in all 2,094 appointments in both of my Departments including all attached offices, subordinate offices and institutes since January 1948. Of these only 360 are Sindhis, most of them nominated by the Transfer Bureau of the Home Ministry. The Home Ministry had ordered that next to the Central Government's own personnel from Pakistan, vacancies should preferably be filled by Government servants from the Frontier, Sind, and Baluchistan Provinces only, as the East Punjab and West Bengal Governments were expected to absorb personnel from West Punjab and East Bengal. So the Transfer Bureau filled most of the vacancies from the above three provinces. Sind being the largest among these provinces, those who registered themselves with the Transfer Bureau were also largely from Sind. Naturally, therefore, many of the vacancies were filled by the Transfer Bureau by nominating men from Sind. In the case of other Ministries also the Transfer Bureau had to nominate more men who belonged to Sind. I have had no hand in these appointments by the Transfer Bureau. The appointments outside the Transfer Bureau are ordinarily all technical appointments which have been filled, on grounds of merit and suitability, either through the Federal Public Service Commission or departmental committees.

In all about 12,000 persons from the above three provinces were registered with TB, of whom I understand 9,000 have been absorbed. The majority of these would be from Sind. The number of 360 in all in my two Departments is a very small fraction. I have no doubt that the number taken up in some other Ministries must be equally numerous, if not even greater.

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It has pained me to see the jealous and hostile attitude of some of our countrymen in the Services and their friends in regard to the absorption of poor, distressed, distracted refugee breadwinners of families even when they are fit and qualified and considered so by the normal appointing agencies. It is a question of "vested interests", whether it is trade or the Services. I am prepared to talk over and personally discuss with the Member who has written to you and explain to him the real position.

Yours sincerely,
Jairamdas Doulatram

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

ENCLOSURE II

New Delhi
4 December 1948

My dear Panditji,

I received day before yesterday your letter of 1 December forwarding a copy of a letter from a Member of the Constituent Assembly regarding my Ministry. The letter makes a general reference to the "highly unsatisfactory administration" of my Ministry and to the "lack of achievement of anything tangible" by it. I do not know what comments I can make on such a general and sweeping allegation. I can only say that those who are in touch with my Ministry, officials and non-officials, coming from all parts of India, and even those who come from abroad, have been highly complimentary in respect of the work done by us. No doubt every Ministry is capable of achieving more, and the obstacles that stand in the way need not be mentioned in this letter.

The only specific matter which is raised in this letter and which the writer refers to as "sins of commission" on my part relates to the appointment of Bengalis in my Ministry. I shall not say anything about the language in which the letter is couched, which discloses a preconceived hostile attitude. Many Members of the Constituent Assembly come to me and frankly discuss with me matters affecting my administration. In fact, I have told everyone that nothing will please me more than to place all facts before the Members so that there can be no scope for any misunderstanding. If a Member, however, refuses to do this and makes wild allegations to you directly, I am indeed helpless.

I did notice certain comments regarding appointment of Bengalis in my Ministry. In fact, similar comments have appeared in the Press referring to the alleged partiality of almost all Ministers in favour of persons belonging to their respective provinces. As the allegations were of a vague character, it is not possible for anyone to repudiate them publicly.

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The letter states that "seven out of eight heads of Departments" in my Ministry have become Bengalis since I took charge. This is an amazingly incorrect statement. Even today the three most important offices in my Ministry, namely, those of Secretary and two Joint Secretaries, who practically control the entire administration, are held by South Indians. The two next important posts are those of Director-General, Industry and Supply, and Director-General, Disposals. One of these is held by Dr. Ghosh, who was selected with the approval of the Cabinet, and the other by a South Indian, Mr. Sivsankar, who was selected by me. The next three important Departments are those of the Textile Commissioner, the Iron and Steel Controller, and the Coal Commissioner. The present Textile Commissioner is a Bengali. But he has been in that Department for a long number of years and was promoted as Textile Commissioner from the office of Joint Textile Commissioner, which he held with great credit, before I became Minister. The Iron and Steel Controller is a Parsi. The Coal Commissioner is, as you know, a retired ICS officer, Mr. Sinha, who was also selected after most careful consideration and with the approval of the Cabinet.

I am collecting full data regarding the appointments made in my time, and I shall be able to satisfy anyone that in not one single case has any partiality been shown to anyone merely because he happens to be a Bengali.

Two specific cases have been mentioned in the letter and these relate to the Salt Controller and the General Manager of HAL [Hindustan Aircraft Ltd.], Bangalore. I enclose two separate notes relating to these appointments.

I also enclose a short note regarding the method of appointments followed in my Ministry, which is, I believe, similar to the procedure followed in other Ministries as well.

Now that the question of provincial bias on the part of Ministers has been raised, I would suggest to you that you should immediately call for a statement showing a complete list of appointments made in all Ministries since 15 August 1947, showing the procedure adopted in each case and also the percentage of persons belonging to various provinces.

Apart from appointments made since 15 August 1947, the tabular statement should also indicate how provinces are represented under each Ministry, taking into consideration all higher posts under it. The list need not include assistants but may be confined to holders of offices above that cadre.

I have been myself most anxious to see that all the provinces are fairly and equitably represented within the Ministry as far as circumstances permit. For this purpose on several occasions Provincial Governments have been addressed with a special request to spare the services of some competent officers. In some places we have succeeded, but in most cases we have failed because of the dearth of sparable officers within the provinces themselves.

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As regards my own Ministry, I shall be prepared to come and further explain matters to you personally if you so choose. I shall also be prepared to meet such Members of the Constituent Assembly and others who have approached you because I am sure I shall be able to satisfy any one who has kept an open mind, both regarding the method of recruitment and the qualifications of the personnel selected. When an unfair attack of this character is made on one of your colleagues, he may expect full protection from you. I entirely agree with you that it is most unfortunate that such reports should spread; it is injurious not only to the Minister concerned but also to the Government as a whole. In some cases disgruntled persons within the Ministries initiate this campaign and this, if unchecked, is detrimental to the interest of administration.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
8 December 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 7 December 1948 on the question of appointments in certain Ministries.

2. I do not think it is practical politics to send for the statements of appointments made in various Ministries from 15 January 1947 with all the details which Syama Prasad wants us to collect. You will see from Jairamdas's letter that from 1 January 1948 alone some 2,094 appointments have been made in his Ministries. Even if we limit it to officers, the number would be quite large. I do not think any useful purpose will be served because, in the first place, no similar allegations have been made in regard to other Ministries; secondly, the Government of India have not recognised appointments on a provincial basis so that there is no question of any provinces being represented in any particular ratio; and, thirdly, as regards procedure in making appointments, it is practically the same in all other Ministries, viz., as far as possible, appointments lasting for more than a year are mostly filled through the FPSC [Federal Public Service Commission] and that lately most of them are being filled through the Transfer Bureau. In

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regard to Secretariat appointments for posts of Under-Secretary and above, the Selection Board makes its recommendations. Ministers make their choice from a panel which the Selection Board, wherever possible, submits. Unless we make it an invariable rule that the first choice of the Selection Board should be accepted by the Minister, a suggestion that the Minister is guided by his own predilections—whether on a provincial or personal basis—is impossible to avoid.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
9 December 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 8 December regarding appointments in certain Ministries.

In view of what you say, it would be inadvisable to ask for statements of appointments from various Ministries and matters might be allowed to rest there.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
14 December 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sending you with this letter an extract from a report from our Charge d'Affaires in Brussels, Badruddin Tyabji. This extract deals with a conversation with Mrs. Ikramullah, wife of the Pakistan Foreign Secretary and niece of Shahid Suhrawardy. This lady has delivered very offensive speeches at the UN General Assembly, specially on the question of genocide in India. Before partition she was a very aggressive Muslim Leaguer.

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I am sure you will be interested in this report.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

Mrs. Ikramullah, wife of the Pakistan Foreign Secretary and one of the Pakistan delegates to the UNO, rang us up and came to lunch today. We had, of course, known her very well in Delhi in the old days. She gave us a lot of information about Pakistan. She made no bones of the fact that she was thoroughly disillusioned about life there, and with the way in which things were going in the new State. Punjabi self-seekers completely dominated the administration and political life. This had resulted in a general debasement of culture, social activities and political ideals, which was most discouraging. To use her own words "Muslim culture and civilisation, for which some of them had fought for Pakistan, seemed likely to meet its doom because of its creation." They realised now that the finest flowers of Indian Muslim culture remained in India, and that it had really been only as a result of the fusion of Hindu and Muslim genius that it had achieved its perfection. Even Muslim poets from Delhi and Lucknow, divorced from their environment and from their public (Hindu and Muslim), were no longer able to write. Pakistan was fast degenerating into a second Afghanistan. There was a great longing among all sensible people in Pakistan to have close and friendly relations with India, but their voices were drowned by those who exploited the cry of "Pakistan in danger" and by the general fear that Indian leaders had not genuinely accepted the fact of partition, and that every move made for better understanding or closer economic relations between the two States was made with the idea of forcing an ultimate political unity.

On the question of Kashmir she said that there were some people, like herself, who appreciated Pandit Nehru's desire to incorporate Kashmir in India, not so much to gain further territory or power, but to refute the two-nation theory, and to vindicate the Congress stand that India was a secular State in which the population of even a territory which had a majority of Muslims could live in harmony with the rest of the country.

Speaking of her work at the UNO, she said that she had desisted from making a violent attack on India regarding genocide, because it had come to her notice unofficially through Professor Habib that such a speech would only result in worsening the position of the Muslims in India rather than improving it, and she inquired from me whether this was really so. It seemed to me an astonishing question for an intelligent person to ask; and I took the opportunity to point out to her that nothing was worse for the Indian

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Muslims than the utterly unjustified and outrageous attacks made by Pakistan officials and leaders on the Indian Government regarding their treatment of Muslims. I said that it was an astonishing piece of effrontery for Muslim leaders, officials and the well-to-do who had deserted India in order to line their own pockets even more than before, to continue to preach to the 30 millions of poor Muslims whom they had left behind, dispirited, leaderless, utterly deceived and disillusioned in India. The Indian Government and Congress leaders had done their best in extremely difficult circumstances, of which perhaps the most difficult one was the utter lack of reciprocal action in Pakistan to treat the Muslims and other minorities in India generously, and to build up India as a secular State. If Pakistan was really genuine in her desire to help the Indian Muslims, the best way of doing so would be to appreciate those efforts, and to take reciprocal action on behalf of the Hindu minorities in Pakistan. By persisting in their attacks on the Indian Government in this matter, and proclaiming in season and out of season that India was a Hindu State they would only succeed in making it really so, and if that happened the entire responsibility would be theirs. She agreed with this view, and said that she hoped with all her heart that the Pakistan Government would be able to keep the Hindu minority in East Bengal; and that her uncle Shahid Suhrawardy was disliked and distrusted in Pakistan, entirely for the reason that he had been saying exactly the same things that I had. She asked me what was the best way for bringing about an improvement in Indo-Pakistan relations. Giving my personal views, I said—

(i) Solution of the Kashmir problem by mutual adjustment of boundaries and a joint defence agreement for the northern frontier.

(ii) Improvement and development of our cultural and commercial relations on the lines of Benelux.

(iii) Effective measures by Pakistan for the protection and well being of its minorities.

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New Delhi
15 December 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have this morning seen a report dated the 13th of the Committee of the Minorities Advisory Committee which was appointed to report on the minorities problem, particularly that of the Sikhs. The other day we discussed this very problem and you kindly told me that the whole question will be gone into further on Babu Rajendra Prasad's return to Delhi about the end of this

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month. In view of what you told me, I hope that this report is not the final word.

May I restate that it has never been my view that the Sikhs should have separate electorates or that they should be given weightage? As I made clear, I do not agree with the demands put forward by the Akali Dal. I am not in favour of anything which conflicts with the basic principles that have been laid down. I and all the Sikh members of the Punjab Legislature, except perhaps one or two, fully believe that the problem can be settled without violating the agreed principles to the satisfaction of the vast majority of Sikhs.

Yours sincerely,
Baldev Singh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Camp Ram Bagh Palace
Jaipur
19 December 1948

My dear Baldev Singh,

Thank you for your letter of 15 December 1948.

As I told you, the report of the Committee will have to come before the Minorities Advisory Committee which is meeting on the 30th of this month. Dr. Rajendra Prasad has agreed [with] the report, and if at the time we discuss this matter in the Advisory Committee you put forward any suggestions for dealing with this problem, in accordance with the principles we have already accepted, I am sure the Committee will gladly and carefully consider your suggestions.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh
Minister for Defence
New Delhi

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New Delhi
29 December 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have tried to discuss the Sikh problem with you on several occasions. The other day when I met you in Pilani you very kindly promised to take it up on your return here today or tomorrow when Babu Rajendra Prasad was also expected to be present. On enquiry I find that Babu Rajendra Prasad is not coming here till 3 January. As I said when I spoke to you, I personally feel that the matter entirely rests in your hands,—whatever is agreed to by you will be accepted by not only the members of the Minority Sub-Committee but also by the Minority Advisory Committee and the Constituent Assembly.

There is a deep-laid conviction in the minds of Sikhs that you are their best friend and of this you have given generous proof on several occasions. When, however, we talked in Pilani you remarked that the Sikhs used to have faith in you but not to the same extent now. I have been worrying as to what could have led you to say this, and both Sardar Swaran Singh and myself have not been able to think of anything which might have led you to this conclusion.

I have heard it said by some people that Master Tara Singh[1] is supported by me in his present attitude. Nobody knows my views and beliefs better than yourself. I was pushed into politics against my wish and ever since I have been in, I have tried my best, under the most difficult circumstances, to bring the Sikhs around to the Congress point of view. I need not go into the difficulties I have had to face; but in spite of the better fight in the 1946 elections, the Sikhs stood side by side with the Congress, and there is not a single instance since in which I have let the premier organisation down. Furthermore, as you know, after months of

1 President, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee; resigned from Congress after World War II and organised Panthic Akali party which agitated for a separate state for Sikhs

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discussion and persuasion, I was successful in persuading all the Panthic MLAs in East Punjab and Centre to join the Congress. This was done with a clear conscience and honesty of purpose both in the interests of the Sikhs, the East Punjab province and the country as a whole. It pains me to hear at this stage that I am not honest in my motives. There are some amongst Sikhs who are after cheap popularity and are bent on spreading all kinds of misunderstandings for personal gains; but I am not worried and in view of what has happened in the past I cannot expect them to have a good word for me. But when they are successful in creating even a little suspicion in the mind of a leader of your eminence, I naturally feel hurt. It is these people who are responsible for the talk that Master Tara Singh has my support and sympathy in his present attitude. This is wholly baseless and I have not the least hesitation in affirming, as I have done before, that I do not at all agree with Master Tara Singh in his present policy. In fact during my several discussions with him in recent months I have tried my best to persuade him to stop his communal campaign but without success. As far as I and others of my way of thinking are concerned, we have joined the Congress after careful consideration. We will stand by the Congress and the question of our wavering does not arise. We will fight anti-Congress forces if we are asked to do so at the next election on the Congress ticket. I am not one of those who change colour for the sake of some slight advantage here and there and will not seek election on any other ticket. I am writing these few lines so that no doubt may be left in your mind as far as my personal position is concerned. You have given me fatherly treatment, and it has been your guidance and help by which I have been able to weather so many storms in the past, and I consider it my duty to explain to you the position frankly and to seek your aid.

We are passing through extremely critical times. We had very difficult problems to solve. My view is that it is essential at this stage to have the largest measure of agreement among the minorities consistent with Congress ideals. With this view in my mind, I have been trying to find a solution of the Sikh problem. I do not want any communal weightage nor do I favour separate electorates. But there is one impression in my mind and that is this—if within the basic principles laid down by the Congress, any consideration can be shown to the Sikhs, the Congress should be prepared to do so. I have not the least doubt in my mind that once such a solution is found, we will be able to carry a large

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part of the masses with us. We may in fact with your aid and blessing eliminate the opposition altogether.

Yours sincerely,
Baldev Singh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
30 December 1948

My dear Baldev Singh,

Thank you for your letter dated 29 December 1948 regarding the Sikh problem and your own position relating thereto.

You know very well how sympathetic I have been to the position of the Sikh community. As an instance, I need only give you the support which I gave to the proposal regarding the appointment of Sardar Harnam Singh as a judge of the East Punjab High Court. You know that there was opposition to it here, but that was successfully met.

My own contacts with you have throughout been frank and cordial and I can assure you that I have neither mental reservations nor any other misunderstanding of your attitude, which I know so well. The difficulty arises out of the impression which is generally prevalent and to which some of the Sikh friends themselves give currency that your attitude is the same as that of Master Tara Singh. Your differences with His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala, who is generally taken to represent the party opposed to Master Tara Singh, have been taken further to lend support to this proposition. As you know, I hold no brief for His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala, but I thought it only fair to tell you in what light these unfortunate differences were being taken. No one has deplored more than myself these manifestations of disunity among the Sikhs, and it is this disunity which has resulted in the inability of Sikh political leaders to face with confidence the rank communalism of Master Tara Singh.

It has been a real pleasure to read such an open and frank declaration of your nationalist views and your firm resolve to cast your future with the Congress. It has not come as any news to me. I fully appreciate the difficulties in the path of a nationalist

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Sikh. It is only with the firmness of faith and resolve, to which you have given expression, that those difficulties can be overcome. Since the receipt of your letter, we have had a full and frank discussion on the Sikh demands. As I have told you, it is only when concrete suggestions are made that a line of action can be chalked out. It is quite clear that the Constitution cannot be disfigured by provisions which we conceive are opposed to the very principles or which we feel would be inappropriate in a permanent measure of that kind. The demands are at best temporary; the Constitution is intended to exist for all time. While allowing for this, I am prepared to look into any concrete suggestions which might be made. About this I have already written to you earlier and I repeat that again.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh
New Delhi

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Government House
New Delhi
24 December 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your Ministry has sent up the Bombay Harijan Temple Entry (Amendment) Act, 1948, for assent. There is a Bill in Madras also to the same effect. The present Bill gives us an opportunity to consider the full meaning of the step proposed. It is true that we should prevent trustees of temples raising vexatious objections on the ground that the institution is a sectional institution. At the same time we should see that the law as now proposed does not take things too far and convert even a private or family temple into a public temple automatically. "Temple" as defined in this Bill includes any place, to whomsoever belonging, which is used as a place of religious worship by any section of the Hindu community and includes all land appurtenant thereto. The word "section" is a secular word and will cover more than caste or sub-caste. It is possible that if the law is passed as now put up, every private or family temple would become a public temple. It is not only Harijan entry that is involved but it would amount to making it impossible for a private or family temple to be maintained as

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such. If in the definition, instead of the words "any section thereof" the words "any caste or sub-caste thereof" were substituted, this difficulty may not arise; or an express saving clause to exclude private or family shrines may be inserted.

Although it means some delay I think it is our duty to see that mistakes are not committed in a hurry, for the law will be permanently on the Statute Book and may give rise to misuse by interested persons.

I suggest, therefore, that this aspect of the Bill may be further examined. If the Government of Bombay agree to set the matter right on the above lines, it will provide a useful guide to other provinces.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

303

Camp Pilani
26 December 1948

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your letter of 24 December 1948 regarding the Bombay Harijan Temple Entry (Amendment) Act, 1948. Before submitting the case to you, I had carefully considered the definition of the word 'temple'. I do not think that that definition is capable of converting even a private or family temple into a public temple automatically. The term "section of the Hindu community" has, obviously, a much wider connotation than a family or even one or two other members of the neighbourhood. I believe there are judicial decisions on the connotation of this term. Apart from this, the same definition has already been part of the Statute in Orissa and no abuses have come to notice. In these circumstances, I feel that the definition had better remain as it is. Any saving clause such as you have suggested would merely give scope to the pujaris of temples and shrines to claim the protection of the law courts or promote frivolous litigation and thereby prevent Harijans from exercising their right of worship.

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2. On the whole, therefore, I would leave the Act as it is. I am sure in case it leads to any misuse the Provincial Government would not hesitate to correct it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari
New Delhi

304

Camp Pilani
24 December 1948

My dear Gopalaswami,

I have received the enclosed telegram from Balasaheb Kher, Premier of Bombay. If, as I understand, the movement of wagons to the famine-stricken areas in Gujarat has been affected by top priority military movements, I suggest that both the purpose and the duration of stoppage or restriction may be explained to Balasaheb on the telephone, so that he may be quite at ease. If there are any other reasons, I feel that we must do something to assist him in successfully dealing with famine conditions in Gujarat, and we should not restrict the supply of wagons.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
Minister for Transport & Rlys.
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

TELEGRAM

23 December 1948

Honourable Deputy Prime Minister
Government of India
New Delhi

FROM KHER TO HON. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER. IMPORTANT AND MOST IMMEDIATE. AS RESULT OF RAILWAY BOARD LOCAL BB&CI RAILWAY AUTHORITIES HAVE INFORMED US OF MOST DRASTIC CUT IN WAGONS FOR MOVEMENT OF FOOD AND GRASS TO FAMINESTRICKEN AREAS IN GUJARAT. PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENT WAS THAT DAILY TWO FOOD SPECIALS AND TWO GRASS SPECIALS WOULD BE ALLOCATED PLUS ONE

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SPECIAL FOR MOVEMENT OF OTHER ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES LIKE KEROSENE OIL DIESEL OIL AND CEMENT. HAVE NOW BEEN INFORMED THAT ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM DELHI ONLY ONE FOOD SPECIAL WILL BE ALLOCATED AND NO REGULAR ALLOTMENT OF WAGONS FOR MOVEMENT OF GRASS OR OTHER ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES TO GUJARAT CAN BE MADE. HAVE FURTHER BEEN INFORMED THAT AS ALL EMPTIES ARE BEING MOBILISED TO MAKE SPECIAL TRAINS FOR DELHI NO REGULAR SUPPLY OF WAGONS FOR MOVEMENT OF GRASS OR CHARCOAL INTO BOMBAY CITY CAN BE PROMISED. THESE AMAZING DECISIONS WILL MOST CERTAINLY CREATE A SITUATION IN GUJARAT AND BOMBAY CITY WHICH WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO HANDLE AND RESULT IN STARVATION OF LAKHS OF CATTLE AS WELL AS CAUSE SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF FOOD IN FAMINESTRICKEN GUJARAT. WOULD FURTHER POINT OUT THAT FOR YEARS ROUGHLY ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY WAGONS OF HAY MOVED DAILY INTO BOMBAY CITY. UNABLE THEREFORE TO UNDERSTAND PRESENT EMBARGO ON MOVEMENT. MOST ESSENTIAL THEREFORE THAT LOCAL RAILWAY AUTHORITIES BE GIVEN FULL DISCRETION TO MEET EMERGENT NEEDS OF BOMBAY CITY AND FAMINESTRICKEN AREAS OF GUJARAT AND SUGGEST THAT PRESENT ORDERS FROM MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT BE SUSPENDED FOR THE PRESENT. WOULD REQUEST YOUR IMMEDIATE PERSONAL INTERVENTION TO PREVENT SERIOUS BREAKDOWN.

PREMIER

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Government House
New Delhi
27 December 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sending you copy of an interpellation paper received in this office. Shri Biswanath Das[1] of Orissa has given notice of these questions. It is remarkable how deterioration has set in on our people. These questions should be ruled out by the Speaker as there is no reason for any indulgence now. But whether the Speaker will do it or not, I suggest that you inform Mr. Biswanath Das that such interpellations on the part of a member of the Congress Party cannot now be permitted, and he should write to the Speaker's office withdrawing them.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

[1] Veteran Congress leader of Orissa; twice Chief Minister; Governor of UP; President, Servants of the People Society, New Delhi

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ENCLOSURE

QUESTION FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA
(LEGISLATIVE)

Starred D. No. 9

Dt. 1-2-49

Shri Biswanath Das: Will the Honourable Minister of Finance be pleased to refer to Schedule III of the Government of India Act 1935 as adapted and state:

(a) the amounts allotted towards the pay, allowances and travelling expenses of His Excellency the Governor-General (each separately) for the year 1948-49 as also amounts allotted under such heads in each of the three previous years;

(b) the amount of tax that the present Governor-General has to pay out of his pay referred to in part (a);

(c) whether it is a fact that a vegetable garden, a bakery, a dairy etc. are maintained for the Governor-General;

(d) if the answer to part (c) above be in the affirmative, what are the various specific establishments maintained and the amount allotted under each of the heads referred to in part (c) for the year 1948-49 and the amounts spent under each of such heads in each of the three previous years;

(e) whether it is a fact that His Excellency the Governor-General had asked the Government to reduce all such establishment;

(f) if so, the action taken and the date from which such action is taken; and

(g) whether it is a fact that His Excellency the Governor-General credits a good fraction of his pay to Government account towards the boarding charges of his dependents like his grand-children?

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Camp Pilani
28 December 1948

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 December 1948, regarding a question of which notice has been given by Shri Biswanath Das about your salary, allowances, etc.

2. It is quite clear that the question has not yet come up to the Speaker for admission. The point of refusal to admit the question, therefore, does not arise just now. These questions will be put up

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before the Speaker and he will then decide whether to admit them or not. Under the rules and practice, however, we are precluded from making a suggestion to the Speaker that the question should be disallowed. As regards your suggestion that the question should be withdrawn, I shall speak to the Chief Whip on my return to Delhi tomorrow and will write to you again.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari
New Delhi

307

7 Kingswood Court
Maidenhead
Berks [UK]
19 December 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

In the very scanty news of India which gets into our sadly curtailed and paper-restricted Press in England I have been sorry to see more than once during the year a reference to your being unwell. I hope that you have conquered these indispositions, and since this is a letter of good wishes for the New Year I trust that you will enjoy untroubled good health during 1949.

Much has happened during the year, and I am sure that the very heavy responsibilities which have fallen upon you must have been something of a strain. I hope that next year's problems may be less exacting. I am sure that you can count upon those feelings of cordiality and friendliness which, when you last wrote, you hoped would be felt here in Great Britain by former opponents of India's freedom. I do not think that anyone here whose opinion is worth having entertains towards India any other feelings than goodwill and sympathy, whether she continues within the Commonwealth or establishes some less intimate relations with us as a sovereign independent republic. I am myself by no means convinced that the second alternative is not the one which would be most satisfactory for both our countries.

But my sentiments on these bigger problems are not of moment: all that I wish to [do] in this letter is to send you and Miss Patel sincere good wishes and my hopes that 1949 will be a year of progress and prosperity both for you and for India.

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With very cordial greetings,

Yours sincerely,
A. E. Porter[1]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

308

Camp Pilani
27 December 1948

My dear Porter,

Thank you for your letter of 19 December 1948 and your good wishes for 1949. Last year has witnessed so many changes and so many developments, both in the national and international sphere. During these, we have had occasion to feel that the attitude of Britain, though not perhaps of the British people, was something quite unwarranted by any acts of omission or commission on our part. But throughout, even though our friendship has been strained somewhat, there has been considerable goodwill and friendship for Britain. I have no doubt that this accumulated capital will succeed in forging ties of close association between India and Great Britain.

We have also had our first year of freedom from British tutelage. We have made mistakes—those were inevitable—and there is no guarantee that even under the tutelage we would not have made the same or similar mistakes, but on the whole, I think, we have not done too badly and that we have steered the course of our country safely through many dangers and difficulties. In doing so, however, it would be only human to recognise the debt which we owe to the administrative system and machinery handed down to us.

Since February, after Gandhiji's death, my health has not been satisfactory. The strain has been tremendous and it has not been possible for me to take rest enjoined by my medical advisers. Nevertheless, I have been bearing the strain fairly well.

You have not told me how you are getting on. I hope you have settled down and have found some useful occupation in which you are being of some help to your country in the difficult times through which it is passing. As I have said elsewhere, at the present juncture, no service either to India or to England

[1] ICS; Secretary, Home Department, 1946-47

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can be greater than for every individual inhabitant of either country to make his maximum contribution to the solution of the country's problems.

With kindest regards and all good wishes for 1949 from us both,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

A. E. Porter Esq. ICS
7 Kingswood Court
Maidenhead
Berks (UK)

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CHAPTER XII

CABINET CO-ORDINATION

309

Dehra Dun
28 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

You remember I wrote to you some time ago that I was thinking of making a change in the incumbency of Secretary, Home Ministry. Banerjee is proposing to go on leave probably early next month. After the leave expires, he will be put on the Special Selection Board devised for making recruitment to the emergency cadre of the Indian Administrative Service. After the Selection Board has reported, Banerjee proposes to go on leave again. My own intention is not to recall him to the Home Ministry and with that end in view, I have been thinking of a substitute. After careful consideration, I have come to the view that H. V. R. Iengar would be the most suitable substitute. Actually, I cannot think of anyone else.

2. I realise that you would find some difficulty in sparing him, but I thought it might be possible for you to do so if the arrangements made during [G. S.] Bajpai's[1] absence have been satisfactory.

3. It is after a great deal of deliberation that I decided to approach you with this request. Even before, I had thought of bringing Iengar to the Home Ministry, but unfortunately Williams, who was then the Joint Secretary in the Home Ministry, was senior to him. That Ministry requires a very vigilant, active and able officer and I am confident that Iengar would be able to overhaul that Ministry after about a year of Bajpai's regime! I hope it will be possible for you to accede to my request.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

[1] ICS; Secretary-General, Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, 1947; adviser to Indian delegation to UN Security Council for discussions on Kashmir; Governor of Bombay State

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New Delhi
29 April 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just received your letter of 28 April. I quite agree with you that the Home Ministry requires a new Secretary. It is a very important and responsible position. I think also that H. V. R. Iengar is a first-rate man, able and reliable. In view of the importance I attach to the Home Ministry, I would have agreed to his ceasing to be my Principal Private Secretary. But a new development has now taken place, and he is going to be the Secretary of the Cabinet Co-ordination Committee. It seems to me that nothing is more important now than close co-ordination between the different ministries. There has been a very great lack of co-ordination lately and all our work is suffering. To pull Iengar out of this work now might well mean collapse of the CCC.

However, I shall speak to Iengar and find out what his own reactions are.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

311

Mussoorie
1 May 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 29 April 1948 regarding Iengar.

I would still request you to persuade Iengar to come to the Home Ministry. As I wrote to you, he is the only man who, I consider, could fill the post, having regard to the present position of internal security and certain other matters which demand urgent attention. Even if the proposal regarding the Co-ordination Committee goes through, I would still put in my claim for his services. He was Home Secretary in the Bombay Ministry

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and is fully conversant with the problems. For the post of Secretary of the Co-ordination Committee, when it comes about, perhaps you can find some other suitable person.

As regards the Cabinet Co-ordination Committee, the first I heard about it was when I saw the minutes of the last meeting that was on 20 April, at which you mentioned this matter and said that you would be submitting detailed proposals. I have just now seen cursorily your detailed scheme. The proposal requires very careful consideration. You know the circumstances in which it was given up soon after the League Members entered the Cabinet. I feel rather differently on this matter and would be glad if you could postpone consideration of this subject until you and I have had a talk about it some time towards the end of this month when you come here. I myself feel that whatever co-ordination in economic and industrial matters is required can be achieved through the Economic Committee of the Cabinet which was set up some time ago, but which apparently has not been functioning as it should be. A Co-ordination Committee and an elaborate office such as is contemplated is more likely to cause friction than resolve it. I understand that the previous experience was not quite happy, though I admit that there were different circumstances prevailing then. The fundamental undercurrent of suspicion both amongst Ministers and officers that it supersedes ministerial responsibility would have to be contended with. These are points which I feel need very careful consideration, and I hope it will be possible for you to accept my suggestion regarding postponement of the consideration of this scheme, till we have been able to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
2 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 1 May.

About Iengar I gave him your message and told him that I would not like to come in his way. I left it entirely to him.

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His present reaction is that he would like to continue his present work and more specially the Co-ordination Committee's work.

As regards the Cabinet Co-ordination Committee, we have discussed this informally in Cabinet on two or three occasions and there was general agreement about it. I myself feel that some such committee is quite essential. The small experience I had of the last CCC was good and the Committee worked smoothly. What we had here was a reproduction on a small scale of what they had in England. They found there that some such machinery had become inevitable. This is not a matter of co-ordination in the economic and industrial sphere only, but of seeing generally that Cabinet decisions are carried out expeditiously and that normal routine delays do not occur. There is no intention of having any big secretariat. Practically speaking the existing Cabinet and PM's Secretariats will function as they are, but jointly.

I have been going into the working of various departments, and I am amazed to find the delays occurring from lack of any contact with each other. There is a very marked deterioration in many of them. Ministers are often helpless and their own orders are not carried out promptly or are held up by some other department. There was a general complaint about this in the Cabinet and hence the idea of a CCC was welcomed. There is no question of ministerial or secretarial responsibility being in any way superseded. It is only intended to facilitate the carrying out of decisions made. The CCC will not take any decisions which the Ministers take. It is in fact a formal and expeditious counterpart of our informal Cabinet meetings.

The Economic and Industrial Sub-committee of the Cabinet has, as you say, hardly functioned. It may continue to exist, but I do not expect much from it. I think the time has come for us to have a Minister for Social and Economic Affairs. But that will have to be considered a little later.

I have not found any undercurrent of suspicion amongst Ministers about the proposal to have a CCC. Indeed, the idea was generally welcomed. Nor should there be any room for suspicion among officers, for there is no question of any officer being interfered with in his work. Because of the lack of some such machinery, I am repeatedly compelled to convene meetings of some Ministers and some officers to consider particular matters together. Of course, in this as in other matters a tactful approach is necessary and Iengar has, I think, the necessary tact and ability.

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I fear that our governmental machine as a whole is working very badly. The CCC will not work wonders, but it will help the present position which is a bad one and a deteriorating one. I am thinking of asking Gopalaswami Ayyangar to consider the administrative aspect of the Government of India machinery and to make suggestions for Cabinet consideration. I am really worried at the way things are done or more frequently not done. Everything appears to be at sixes and sevens, and it is difficult to fix responsibility for delays. At the very least it can be said that some effort to improve matters is called for. If that effort is not successful, then another change can be made.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

PS.

I might inform you that some little time back Shanmukham Chetty asked me to let Iengar take up the Finance Secretary's job. Narahari Rao is going soon and his place has to be filled.

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Mussoorie
10 May 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 2 May 1948.

I should be glad for your very early decision regarding Iengar.

As regards the Cabinet Co-ordination Committee, you seem to have decided not to wait for a discussion with me, and I find that it was actually discussed in the Cabinet the next day. The minutes tell me nothing except that the matter was discussed. It is, therefore, unnecessary for me to make any further comments on your observations on that matter.

In two or three matters, I have found that subjects, with which I am intimately concerned or on which I should have welcomed an opportunity of making my contribution, have been discussed in the Cabinet without giving me any opportunity of submitting my views for the consideration of my colleagues. I do not wish to claim any undue concession on account of my

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illness and enforced absence from Delhi. I am, therefore, entirely in your hands, but if you can somehow see your way to accommodating me in such matters, I should be grateful.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

314

New Delhi
12 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

On my return here today I found a number of your letters. I am leaving tomorrow midday for Simla. I shall, therefore, only write to you briefly. Some of the matters will, I hope, be discussed by us when we meet in Mussoorie.

About the Cabinet Co-ordination Committee, the matter was on the agenda because it had been previously discussed on several occasions. There was again a brief discussion and it was then postponed chiefly because of your wishes. I shall discuss this with you when we meet.

About Iengar I have told you my difficulty. My work has become so terribly heavy that I can hardly cope with it with the assistance I am getting. However, I was waiting to know what the future set-up of the Cabinet Office and the Co-ordination Committee might be before any final decision was made.

Of course we must accommodate you in any matter that you wish and postpone consideration of it till we have your views. I do not know to what specially you refer. Some of the cases that have been considered have been pending for a long time. I am more and more feeling that some radical changes are necessary in our governmental set-up which is fast deteriorating. However, I shall discuss this matter with you.

About N. C. Chatterjee, I entirely agree with you that appointments should not be made for communal or political considerations. It was because I felt that his name had been recommended by the people in Bengal on political grounds that I drew your attention to it. Chatterjee has been among the topmost half a dozen of Hindu Mahasabha leaders and has been very anti-Congress. However, as matters have gone pretty far in this

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connection you can certainly go ahead with his appointment as additional judge.

Regarding the influx of Muslims from Pakistan, our policy is clear enough. The difficulty comes in implementing it, specially on the Sind-Rajputana border. You must have seen the Cabinet decision on this. We are asking the military to take some steps in that border to prevent large numbers coming through. Most of the Muslims who have come to Delhi recently are from the UP or other parts of India. They had left Delhi during the disturbances.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

315

Dehra Dun
28 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from Sir C. P. [Ramaswami Aiyar][1] together with its enclosure in original.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

[1] Secretary, All India Congress, 1917-18; Advocate-General, Madras, 1920-23; Law Member, Madras Government, 1923-28; attended London Round Table Conference, 1930-32; Dewan of Travancore, 1936-42; Member, Viceroy's Executive Council for a brief period in August 1942; reappointed Dewan of Travancore, 1942-47

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ENCLOSURE

Santiago
Chile
Hotel Carrera
8 April 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

In continuation of the letter that I posted to you by air mail from New Orleans, I am writing this letter after visiting Brazil and Aregntina (which I am sure you will show to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister, who is of course specially interested in the problems raised).

I met the Foreign Minister and other members of the Brazilian Cabinet and a large number of prominent political and literary personages as well as nearly all the Indian residents, who gave me a party and emphasised the points I am indicating. They informed me of the impending appointment of an Indian Minister to Brazil and mentioned some names that had been published in the Rio de Janeiro Press.

There is absolutely no colour prejudice amongst the people either in Brazil or in the Argentine and, in fact, a large proportion of even the "higher classes" is chocolate-coloured and there is obvious admixture of various racial strains. The amount of unoccupied rich and cultivable land fit for growing grain, fruit and pasture grass is colossal and must run literally into millions of acres. The climate is by no means cold and the winters are not severe as in North America and the countries offer good prospects both for colonisation by Indians (including the refugees who care to travel afield to better their prospects) and for trade and commerce. The mineral wealth of the land is great.

As will be apparent from a decree very recently passed in Brazil (in March '48), a copy of which I enclose, stress is laid on the importance of preserving the "European" and the "ethnical" characteristics of the country and the Indians contend that in practice recent instances have proved that these rules are implemented so as to shut out Indians and Chinese although it is declared that neither race nor religion is a bar. The exceptions are mainly in favour of technicians and professors under contract.

It is most important that adequate representation of India in the diplomatic field should be arranged for, and that the above points should be clarified and at least a sizable quota settled for India. The Brazilian officials lay emphasis on the Indians' tendency to segregation of themselves

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and then not assimilating the habits of life and economic standards of those around them. This is a real difficulty that has to be dealt with.

In Argentina and in Chile, there is a definite policy of encouraging Spaniards, Italians and the Anglo-Saxon races and discouraging others. Mr. Mody, Trade Agent at Buenos Aires, did not meet me though he left his card [for] me when I was away, but I understand that there is a strong party for him and another equally strong against him amongst the few Indians that have settled down permanently in Buenos Aires and its vicinity.

I have noted that doctors and professors are generally welcomed but not "middle-men" nor persons like commission agents and clerks. A large majority of Indians in South America have married women of mixed or pure European parentage and seem to be happily placed.

Many of them have been political refugees, and all of them are anxious to visit India, especially after the attainment of Independence.

With my best regards and good wishes to you and Pandit Jawaharlal,

I am,
Yours very sincerely,
C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar

316

Mussoorie
6 May 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter of Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar which [Purushottam] Tricumdas[1] has sent to me. You have seen his first letter, which Shankar showed to you, and a copy of the second letter which Sir C. P. wrote to me has been sent to you. I feel, on the whole, that Sir C. P. has done a good job of work and that his abilities and talents should be utilised by us in the service of the country. I know how bitterly he has been opposed to us, but I do feel that we should be generous and forgiving in our adversary's defeat and that we should not let go waste his undoubted talents and capacity. Men like Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar start with a great advantage in external fields as they carry a prestige and a position which comparatively unknown personalities have to build up, and their already established contacts provide a useful stepping stone for

[1] Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi, 1914; member, Congress Socialist Party, 1940-45; member, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1949-52; later member of PSP; member, International Commission of Jurists, 1955

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further efforts in that direction. I would, therefore, appeal to you with all the emphasis at my command to utilise his talents in some suitable capacity in foreign countries. Personally, I would myself prefer that he goes to the USA as ambassador. I am confident that, in that position, he will be able to serve this country very well. The USA holds the key to the international situation today. We ourselves have to depend on the USA probably more than on the UK. Without the USA's support in men, money and machinery, I am very doubtful, notwithstanding Asaf Ali's views to the contrary, whether we shall ever succeed in our industrial policy, and it is on that policy that so much of the future of this country depends. For some years, therefore, whether we like it or not, we have to depend on the USA for our progress. Irrespective of party or personal considerations, therefore, we should have in Washington a very able and competent man. I feel that we have such a man in Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and that if only we could rise above the past, we could utilise him. You know that he never spared Bapu. Indeed, he has condemned him and opposed him in more bitter terms than he has ever used either in your case or mine. But Bapu always used him whenever he could and never let personal considerations intervene. I do hope, therefore, it would be possible for you to consider my suggestion.

At the same time, I should not like to press my views against your inclinations, and if you feel that that would not be possible, I should still suggest that during his forthcoming visit to Australia Sir C. P. may be given some semi-official or official capacity which would enable him to speak with some authority and some prestige.

I am also sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have written to [A. Pattom] Thanu Pillai.[1] I suggest that you may write to him on similar lines so that we can assist in closing this unfortunate chapter in the history of Travancore.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

[1] The first Chief Minister of Kerala State; later Governor of Punjab

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New Delhi
21 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

One of your letters dated 6 May has long remained unanswered. This relates to C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar.

I am naturally giving most careful thought to this matter and trying to get other people's reactions to it also. I feel quite clearly that C.P. would not be the right man for Washington or any of the important ambassadorial posts. This has nothing to do with his past except that that past has created a prejudice against him among large numbers of people in India and his appointment would be very unpopular. Our Government is not too popular in some ways and this would add to its unpopularity. It would be said that we are drifting away completely from our Congress standards.

But I have ignored this matter and purely on the merits I have come to the conclusion that C.P. would not suit at all in America. As a matter of fact, I have received advices from the US that while his capability and intellect were greatly admired, he is looked upon as a man out of touch with developments and rather lopsided in his approach. If that was the reaction in America itself, you can well imagine reactions elsewhere. The world situation is an exceedingly delicate one, and everything that is said or done in Washington, London and Moscow on our behalf produces serious consequences. C.P. talks unrestrainably about world politics and thus is likely to create difficulties.

The USA is, of course, most important and we must send a good man there. But the [Americans] are singularly immature in their politics and are getting deeply involved in trouble because of this immaturity. I think that we should take full advantage of our friendship with them but keep perfectly clear from any entanglements.

As C.P. is going to Australia as a guest of the Australian Government, I do not quite see what we can do to give him a special capacity. Of course, we shall inform the Australian Government

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about him and ask our representative there to help him in every way. The problems that arise in Australia today are closely related to the Japanese Peace Treaty and to India's relations with the Commonwealth. Both these are delicate problems and I do not know what views C.P. may have in regard to them. Probably it would be better for him and for us that he has free play to say what he chooses rather than we should try to limit him by briefs and directives. He is not a man to be limited in this way.

I agree with you that it is improper for the Travancore people and Ministry to go out of their way to show discourtesy to C.P. I expect to see Thanu Pillai and I shall speak to him about it.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

The Grove
Teynampet
Madras
27 March 1948

My dear Tricumdas,

I returned to Madras on the 23rd via Calcutta and on my way back halted for a few hours each at Tokyo and Shanghai (noticing with consternation the currency inflation in China). My South American tour was a remarkable experience after the breathless tempo of life and the tremendous industrialisation and utilisation of labour-saving appliances in all activities in the USA, including agricultural. (I made a full study of the TVA [Tenessee Valley Authority] project with the active help of the US officials who took me round). Brazil and Argentina and Peru and Chile have each a few busy Americanised cities, but the vast and undeveloped countries, sparsely populated but full of illimitable resources, are examples of splendour at the top and laziness, apathy and superstition and abject poverty at the other end of the scale—politics being the sport of the active and corrupt few.

Inconceivably rich churches with 50-foot altars of solid gold and marvellous tapestries and murals and vessels encrusted with precious stones, wide avenues and literally thousands of beautifully executed statues, racecourses, bull-rings and hotels exceeding those of New York and Chicago in luxury and mud huts and shabby corrugated iron structures and superstitious folk who hardly bathe and live between starvation and bull-fights and horse races. The

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countries are wonderfully apt for agriculture and the wide spaces may well be colonised by our refugees and surplus population. But India is badly represented in the New World, and there is no propaganda in relation to India (Pakistan does much better). I found in the course of the meetings I addressed and amongst the financial, journalistic and literary groups whom I met everywhere, there is considerable sympathy and goodwill but much ignorance which can and should have been removed. Sardar Patel telegraphed to me twice congratulating me on the success of my tour and asking me to send my views and impressions. I have sent him two memoranda, one on North America and another on the South, and asked him to show them to Pandit Nehru.

In one of his telegrams in answer to my query he stated that he has been advised a period of complete rest and is improving. His illness at this juncture is a real calamity.

One of my main difficulties in the USA was with reference to the invariable questions put to me not only in public meetings but in all private conversations with authors, journalists, financial and industrial magnates as well as the officials in the USA, Brazil and Argentina (who all treated me as a State guest and gave me much hospitality and all facilities). The first of those questions was the attitude of India as to communism and Russia. All over the New World communism is a bugbear and no one understands the "middle of the road" policy. Neither do I, but I could only speak in a personal capacity. Another query is as to the extent and manner of co-operation in industrial and allied matters. Here again I found Asaf Ali declaring that no American capital was needed in India. This was shortsighted as we want machinery and new industries, and unless Americans are definitely interested in the actual working of what they sell or supply, we may be done down. I insisted that 51 per cent of the capital must be ours as well as the general direction of overall policy, but we would welcome American co-operation on this basis. But here again I had to voice my own personal opinions. I found, however, that as a result of my talks persons like Pearl Buck and Louis Fischer, the editors of the New York Times and Herald Tribune and Washington Post, the top men of the National City and Chase Banks, the GEC and some other great corporations, became friendly to Indian programmes and developmental activities.

I have spoken on these matters to Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, whom I met here and who unveiled my portrait in the Cosmopolitan Club and spoke very affectionately about me. You must have read his speech which was fully reported in the Hindu and Express.

This was in marked contrast to the resolution passed by the Travancore State Congress that all statues and memorials to me should be removed and that an enquiry should be held regarding financial commitments entered into during my regime. I don't mind any enquiry and the removal of memorials

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does not hurt my prestige but only that of the Maharaja as whose agent and on whose behalf I acted, but what I disapprove of is the obscene and indecent publicity given to these resolutions. I do hope that Patel can be induced to bring these people to their senses. I could have written to him but preferred not to and I shall be grateful if you will move in the matter speedily (if possible over the telephone to Dehra Dun, where the Sardar is staying). I see that Thanu Pillai is going to Delhi tomorrow and Patel can contact him. The poor Maharaja seems to have lost heart completely and displays a lack of stamina and courage which has deeply hurt and amazed me. But, generally speaking, all the great Kshatriya rulers—descendants of the Sun and Moon —behave like mendicants and sycophants and have no more spirit than a parcel of frightened rabbits or sheep. They deserve [their] fate and I congratulate Patel on the brilliant results of his downright policy.

The general situation seems to be very confused, and one does not know what the partial withdrawal of Patel from active work will mean in relation to the Socialists and Communists and the communal groups. I shall be glad if you will let me have your impressions and views as you are better able in Bombay to appraise the new tendencies. I am leaving for Ooty in a day or two and you may write to Delisle, Ooty.

The Australian Government have formally invited me to visit their country and New Zealand, and I shall go there about the end of August or early in September. Until then I shall stay in Ooty and do a bit of writing.

Their Highnesses of Travancore are now in Ooty and I shall of course see them, but have told them that, in the events that have happened, I would be absolutely unconcerned with the politics and affairs of the State although my personal loyalty and affection remain unaffected.

There are wild rumours here, especially after Mookerjee's speech, of my translation to Delhi or to London or Washington, but as you know I am not anxious for office or emoluments and while I am willing and anxious to help our newly freed country, I would frankly prefer to do so in a non-official (and external) capacity, especially as one cannot participate usefully when policy at the top is indeterminate and transitional. The fate of men like [C.H.] Bhabha is a pointer, and I see that Ambedkar and even Shanmukham are in a state of unstable equilibrium. Don't you agree with me?

With my kindest regards and hoping to hear soon from you,

I am,

Ever yours sincerely,

C. P. Ramaswami

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TELEGRAM

Hubli
8 May 1948

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

HONOURABLE GADGIL DECIDES REMARRIAGE 11 MAY. CHILDREN GENUINE FRIENDS SHOCKED BY DECISION SO SOON AFTER DEATH OF HIS NOBLE WIFE. WILL HAVE ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES ON FAMILY AND MAHARASHTRA POLITICS AND HIS PUBLIC LIFE. PRAY ADVISE POSTPONEMENT. IN BAPU'S ABSENCE YOU ALONE CAN INFLUENCE. TELEPHONIC TALK WILL HELP AND SAVE THE SITUATION. PRAY EXCUSE TROUBLES INEVITABLE. UNDERSIGNED GADGIL'S SON-IN-LAW.

SHRINIVAS KEMBHAVE

319

TELEGRAM

Camp Mussoorie
9 May 1948

Hon'ble Shri N. V. Gadgil
Minister for Works, Mines & Power
419 Shanwar
Poona

YOUR SON-IN-LAW HAS WIRED YOU CONTEMPLATE REMARRIAGE ON 11 MAY. I AM SURPRISED TO HEAR OF IT AND IF TRUE WOULD ADVISE YOU IN YOUR OWN INTEREST POSTPONE IT. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT SUCH AN EVENT SO SOON WOULD CREATE CONSIDERABLE EMBARRASSMENT AND CAUSE CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM.

VALLABHBHAI

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Camp Doon Court
Dehra Dun
13 June 1948

Dear Mr. de Valera,

I extend to you a most hearty welcome to India. You have throughout been our warm friend and sympathiser and my late brother, Vithalbhai Patel,[1] had always a very soft corner in his heart for you. I wanted personally to greet you not merely as a friend of his but as a valiant fighter of freedom's battle and a great patriot. It is a great pity that ill-health prevents me from having this pleasure and privilege, and thereby fulfilling one of my most ardent wishes ever since Vithalbhai told me in such nice terms about you. I only hope that if and when you are returning this way I shall have better luck.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Eamon de Valera Esq.

321

New Delhi
7 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter I have received from the Governor-General about the institution of a system of honours and awards for India. He suggests the appointment of a committee to consider this. I have no objection to this. If you also agree, steps might be taken to form some committee. If so, could you kindly indicate what names you would suggest for the committee?

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

[1] A veteran Congress leader and Parliamentarian; first Indian President, Central Legislative Assembly

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ENCLOSURE

Government House
New Delhi
7 February 1948

My dear Prime Minister,

You will recall at our meeting on the 5th January I discussed with you the possible institution of a system of honours and awards for India, the desirability of which I understood you were now in agreement with. In response to your request I promised to let you have some ideas on the subject, which might form the basis for discussion.

I have been thinking this matter over and I feel that we cannot do better than to base our proposals on the Order of the British Empire, (which is very similar to other national Orders e.g. the French Legion of Honour, the American Legion of Merit etc.), with the substitution, of course, of an Indian name for the whole order and Indian names for the different classes in the Order.

One of the main difficulties will be to decide on the number of members of each class of the Order. In this connection you might like to know what is laid down in the Statutes of the Order of the British Empire, which is as follows :

Class	Military Division	Civil Division
1st class or GBE	9	75
2nd class or KBE	48	346
3rd class or CBE	422	1640
4th Class or OBE	Not to exceed 97 in any one year	Not to exceed 336 in any one year
5th class or MBE	Not to exceed 161 in any one year	Not to exceed 509 in any one year

There is also the British Empire Medal in two classes, one for gallantry and one for meritorious service, but I cannot at present find any details of how many may be awarded, although I am pretty sure it is a larger number than the 5th class or MBE of the Order.

In considering the adaption of the Order of the British Empire to India I feel that we should also consider embodying in the new Order, the Order of British India, the establishment for which in the past has been as follows:

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	First Class	Second Class
Indian Army	240	350
Indian States' Forces	18	25
Frontier Corps and Military Police	8	18

I understand that there are already proposals in the Defence Ministry for the substitution of the Order of British India by a new Order to be called the Order of Asoka. I have asked my Private Secretary to obtain details of these, as I am sure that you will agree that it is desirable that the new proposed Order, which we are discussing, should embody the Order of British India, rather than that there should be more than one Order for the new India.

In considering the new Order there is also the question whether it should carry titles and initials after the name as in the British Empire; or whether it is better to follow the American practice, as with their Legion of Merit, with its several classes, and have no distinguishing mark before or after the recipient's name.

There is obviously a great deal to be done in this matter and I am not sure that the best solution in the end is not going to be a committee of, say, the following:

Sir B. N. Rau
Secretary, Ministry of States
Secretary, Home Ministry
Secretary, Ministry of Defence
PPS to Prime Minister
PSGG

I do not think the committee need be any larger, and in fact the smaller it is the more chance we have of coming to a quick conclusion. Perhaps at the first meeting they might have a preliminary discussion on this letter and formulate their views.

Yours very sincerely,
Mountbatten of Burma

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

322

New Delhi
9 February 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 7 February 1948, regarding the institution of a system of honours and awards for India. My own view is that we should have gallantry awards and honours

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for distinguished services in the military field and in the civil sphere we should have a very restricted order, on the lines of the UK Order of Merit, to recognise distinguished services in the field of literature, art and science, another to recognise police gallantry and a third one to civilians for bravery, e.g. in rescue operations from fires, floods, etc. I am entirely opposed to any other honours for civilians.

2. I agree that a committee might go into this question and would prefer if the committee were entirely official. The names of officers suggested by H.E. seem to me quite suitable.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

323

New Delhi
9 February 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your 4 letters of 9 February dealing with the Warrant of Precedence, the question of honours and awards for India, Gopalaswami's telegram about the Security Council proceedings, and Dr. Gopichand Bhargava's reference about Desh Sewak Sena.

I have nothing to suggest about the action you are taking in these various matters. I might mention however that I had a talk with the GG (Governor-General) about the Security Council and I believe he has taken some action in the matter also.

I might mention that I have received some reports from Amritsar to the effect that the RSS people are openly defying orders by bringing out processions etc. and challenging arrest. Their chief men have already gone underground, but others have decided to carry out a programme of defence. I have been further informed that the Akali Party in Amritsar is of opinion that no strong action should be taken against the RSS there. One other fact that I should like to bring to your notice is that one of the chief organisers of the RSS in Amritsar and indeed in East Punjab—he is, I believe, the Chief Provincial Sanchalak—is said to be Rai Bahadur Badri Nath. This gentleman has recently been appointed, or is going to be appointed, the Vice-Chancellor

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of the East Punjab University. If these facts are correct then his appointment appears to be undesirable. Indeed some step might have been taken against him. Perhaps you will kindly inquire into this.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

324

1 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi
22 June 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I arrived here quite comfortably and have been keeping well since my arrival. On the 20th just when Rajaji's plane was being awaited at Palam aerodrome, we had clouds and a few drops of rain—but the temperature cooled down considerably. Since then we have had somewhat cooler temperature and now and then clouds and strong breeze. I hope within the next few days this place will become quite comfortable—as comfortable as it is during the rainy season.

We are having a meeting of the Working Committee on 1 and 2 July. There are some important matters coming up for discussion. One important item as usual will be the situation in the country in which the members will like to have as full information as possible about Kashmir, Hyderabad etc., and will also probably express themselves about the latter. I have received a letter from Maulana Sahib today in which he says that in UP and CP Urdu is being abolished from schools and he wants the matter to be considered by the Working Committee or the Parliamentary Board. Vinobaji met me this morning. He is going the day after tomorrow to the place where Meos are living. Some of them saw me yesterday. They were from Gurgaon and their complaint was that they had been carrying the burden of the Meos of Alwar and Bharatpur and were no longer able with their limited resources to keep them with them. I had a talk with Sjt. Mohnalal. Sjt. Vinoba's idea is that those Meos who did not go to Pakistan, and who have all along remained here—but not in their original homes—should be given back their homes and lands. They are

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entitled to them. Bapu visited the place, asked them not to migrate and promised to them that they would be given their lands and homes. That promise should be honoured. If for any reason the Government is not able to restore them to their homes and lands at present, a definite promise should be made that they would be given back their lands later or an equivalent quantity of other land. There is an attempt being made to move the Kurukshetra refugees to those places in Alwar and Bharatpur and to settle them on Meos' lands. But these refugees are not willing to go there. So the result is that those to whom the land belongs are not allowed to occupy it and cultivate it, while others to whom it is being offered are not willing to take it and the land remains uncultivated and the promise made by Bapu is dishonoured. This is most unsatisfactory. If Government is not in a position to make the promise as suggested above, he wants the Congress and me as the Congress President to do so. Mohanlalji told me that there were difficulties, and there are certain papers from which it appears that you are opposed to this policy, and he feels he cannot do anything unless the policy is changed or revised. I hear, although I cannot vouch for it, Sheikh Abdullah[1], who has been here, visited the place and on being approached by the Meos, told them that the land was theirs and they should do satyagraha for it. So it seems complications are mounting. Vinobaji is going there day after tomorrow and is sure to meet the Meos who will seek his advice, and he proposes to tell them that Bapu's promise should be fulfilled by the Government.

I do not know when you propose returning. I hope the progress in your health is being maintained. If possible, I would like you to be back before the Working Committee meets on the 1st so that we might have the benefit of your presence.

I saw Kripalaniji today. He was very much upset by the Hyderabad affairs. I met Dr. Ambedkar yesterday. He says that our Government has failed in its policy of price control which it is unable to enforce. It has got unnecessarily involved in Kashmir, which he thinks, really belongs to Pakistan. It has failed to tackle Hyderabad which belongs to it. He is disgusted

[1] First President of Muslim Conference in 1932, took leading part in converting it into National Conference. Launched 'Quit Kashmir' movement and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Elected President, All India State Peoples' Conference. Released unconditionally in September 1947; Prime Minister of J & K State from 1948-53; arrested in August 1953 for anti-State activities and released in January 1958; thereafter detained and released several times for his political activities

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with the appointment of Asaf Ali. He told me that he had earned a very bad reputation in America and even [President] Truman was cognizant of all this. His appointment will mean to the highly placed Americans that in India private life and character have no value. This is bound to degrade us in their eyes.

I have fixed the Constituent Assembly some time after the middle of October, although I have not announced the exact date. Pandit Jawaharlal is very sorry about it and has written to me that since I have the authority he will act according to my decision but he is unhappy. Chief Justice Kania has complained to him that on account of the uncertainty of the position by reason of the Constitution not being passed, he is unable to fix upon new judges for the Federal Court. He says that Sjt. Mavalankar also does not like the postponement. All those whom I have met, however, like the postponement and have expressed their satisfaction. Lord Mountbatten was very pleased with it.

I have passed on to you all these bits of news and views for what they are worth. I hope you are well and will be here in time for the Working Committee. A line in reply will be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Camp Dehra Dun
24 June 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

Many thanks for your letter of 22 June 1948. I am very anxious to return to Delhi, but I am afraid I may not be able to attend the Working Committee meeting on 1 and 2 July. According to medical advice, it may yet be too early for me to come down. Until Delhi has had rains, my coming down might mean a setback to my health which, I am sure you will agree, should be avoided, particularly now that after so much rest and so many restrictions and so much regulated life I am just regaining my normal health.

As regards the question of Meos, our enquiries in Alwar and Bharatpur have confirmed that the Meo rising of March-May last year was a well-organised attempt on the part of these

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Meos to create a Meoistan in support of the League's demand for Pakistan. The rising had been inspired by League leaders who had done intensive propaganda for it and had arranged for the supply of arms, ammunition etc. probably as part of their Direct Action programme. Apart from this, feuds between Meos and Ahirs and Jats of this area are of long standing and have created bitterness and animosity which it is impossible for you or me at this distance to appreciate or even to appraise. Both Alwar and Bharatpur are already in a ferment. Rajputs and Jats are considerably agitated not only in these States but in the rest of Rajputana as well. In fact, the situation is very much like a powder magazine which a single spark may set ablaze. To oust non-Muslims settled in these lands by bringing in Muslims would act as such a spark. I for one am not prepared to shoulder responsibility for such an action. Moreover, in the prevailing atmosphere engendered by developments in Kashmir and Hyderabad and in the face of Pakistan's inability to accept a single non-Muslim back, it would be a folly and a disaster to settle Meos in the midst of such dangerous elements. If Sheikh Sahib [who], according to you, advised them to launch satyagraha and Maulana Sahib, who would like these Meos to be settled even in the teeth of local bitterness and opposition, are prepared to shoulder the responsibility, they are at liberty to do so. I am not aware of any promise which Gandhiji made. I am sure he could not have given any promise about resettlement of Meos in the States. I had long talks with him on this question and our policy then was not to interfere with the internal administration of the States. It was only after his murder that we dared to interfere in these States. It was for all these reasons that we decided that Meos should not be allowed to return to Alwar and Bharatpur; instead, they should be given lands in Gurgaon district vacated by Meos who have gone to Pakistan and non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan should be settled in Alwar and Bharatpur States. I still feel that this is the only policy that can be adopted with safety in present circumstances and I have no hesitation in saying that any other policy might well result in a disaster similar to the one which cost us Gandhiji's precious life.

I see no reason why there should be any hurry about this matter, and I do not appreciate the reason why this matter should come before the Working Committee. I have given you my views. If you still feel that this matter should come before the Working Committee and it should pass any resolution on this

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subject contrary to this policy, I would advise postponement of consideration of this question till the next meeting. In my view priority is to be given to the question of resettlement of refugees. If, however, postponement is not considered possible and any decision to reverse the existing policy is taken, I am afraid I will have no alternative but to resign from the Working Committee.

Regarding other matters such as Kashmir and Hyderabad and the question of Urdu in the UP and Dr. Ambedkar's wiews, I shall write to you later.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

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Air Ministry
Whitehall, SW 1
26 June 1948

My dear Patel,

I feel I would like to send you a few lines expressing my good wishes and my earnest hope that you will soon be restored to normal health. I retain my very close interest in Indian affairs and am very conscious of the great burdens of office and responsibility that you have to carry. I am afraid that the trouble is partly due to your tremendous capacity for work, and that consequently you do not spare yourself!!!

I still hope that it will be possible for a satisfactory agreement to be reached, both with regard to Kashmir and Hyderabad. Whatever form of political set-up there may be, both Pakistan and India have everything to gain by friendly co-operation and good neighbourliness. Hyderabad also will have much to gain by closer co-operation with India.

The international situation is again gloomy and, as you know, a serious position has arisen in Berlin. It will require a good deal of statesmanship to avert catastrophe, and much will depend upon the intentions of the Soviet Union. So much could be done for all countries if we could only secure a full measure of co-operation in social and economic reconstruction; but we seem to be reverting to full-blooded power politics, and that makes full co-operation difficult. I think the best course is to be always

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ready for friendship and co-operation, but never merely seek to appease. Let us hope the situation will improve and a reasonable solution found.

With my best wishes to your daughter and yourself.

Very sincerely yours,
Arthur Henderson[1]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Dehra Dun
3 July 1948

My dear Henderson,

Thank you for your personal letter of 26 June 1948 and your good wishes for my recovery. I am now almost normal and am returning to Delhi on 6 July to be on the spot to assist Jawaharlal in his efforts to deal with the many complex problems with which hitherto he has been dealing in my absence almost single-handed. On your side, you are having to deal with many problems of varying complexity, of which your economic and foreign affairs are the most taxing.

I agree with you that the international situation requires the utmost statesmanship which every nation can contribute to the solution of international jealousies and conflicting ideologies. We have naturally to take a cautious line so that we do not get involved in the power politics which are as abhorrent to me as they are to you. At the same time, we feel that our interests lie more closely with the British Commonwealth of Nations and we are doing our best to improve the bonds of friendship and co-operation which have been forged so strongly by your Government's liberal attitude to our aspirations and by the excellent work put in by the Mountbattens. I have no doubt that with a careful handling of the situation at your end it would be possible for us to make the ties even closer. You can have no idea how much speeches like those of Churchill and the attitude of man like Noel-Baker[2] on the question of Kashmir injure the cause of Indo-British friendship and cordiality. Even then, we are trying to remove the cobwebs of suspicion as much as we can. I hope that at your end it would be possible to improve matters.

[1] Under-Secretary of State for India and Burma in Attlee Government
[2] Labour MP; Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of War Transport, 1942

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I am glad you have referred to Kashmir and Hyderabad. In both matters we have been throughout guided by the advice of Lord Mountbatten and our approach is, contrary to what others misrepresent, entirely democratic. We are prepared to be judged by democratic standards, but unfortunately prejudiced correspondents from your country and America deliberately misrepresent our attitude and make it out as if we are indulging in coercive tactics. Unfortunately, it is my experience that the attitude of an average Englishman in India is instinctively against us. There are some honourable exceptions, but those exceptions are rare. I myself felt that we should never have gone to the UNO, and if we had taken timely action when we went to the UNO, we could have settled the whole case much more quickly and satisfactorily from our point of view, whereas at the UNO not only has the dispute been prolonged, but the merits of our case have been completely lost in the interaction of power politics. I should like to say at once that we were so terribly disappointed [at] the attitude of your delegation. Lord Mountbatten helped us to his best capacity, but it was, we maintain, the attitude of Noel-Baker that tilted the balance against us. But for his lead, I doubt if the USA and some other powers would have gone against us.

As regards Hyderabad, I am glad to say that the attitude of your Government is more helpful. We are getting reports of smuggling of arms into Hyderabad by some interested Britishers who are private citizens. I fully realise your difficulty in controlling these non-official activities. At the same time, it is such activities which make our task of promoting a genuine understanding and co-operation between India and the rest of the Commonwealth most difficult. I wish something could be done to propagate amongst the British public in England that if they want India's goodwill, they must make capital out of what is left and not fritter it away by these prejudicial activities.

I was glad to hear from you and appreciate occasional correspondence, though both of us realise how busy each is.

With kindest regards and best wishes from Maniben and myself.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Rt Hon Arthur Henderson, MP

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CHAPTER XIII

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES

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Camp Dehra Dun
4 July 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

With reference to your note circulated to the Cabinet on economic matters, I am sending herewith a note containing my views. If you feel like circulating it to the Ministers of the Cabinet, I have no objection. Indeed, I have prepared the note on the basis that you might find it useful for circulation; otherwise, these are ideas which I should very much like you to ponder over before making up your mind about these problems.

There are, however, a few observations which I thought I would make separately to you as regards the cost of living index and the results achieved by nationalisation in the United Kingdom. These thoughts are prompted by your reference to Cripps in the note.

It is doubtful if the cost of living index which has been compiled gives a correct indication of the rise that has taken place. Before decontrol, the basis of these figures was the controlled prices and not the prices quoted and actually paid in the black market. The rationing of food was confined only to 10 per cent. of the total production and consumption. The rest of the consumption was handled outside Government control. If we took into account the controlled prices of the pre-decontrol days, the correctness of the rise in the index of living would be open to doubt. On the basis of the rise of prices alone, it could not be said that decontrol has failed. Further, we have to bear in mind that the price of sugar is being artificially maintained by the Sugar Syndicate with the help of the UP and Bihar Governments. In other words, the present price of sugar cannot be said to be entirely free from control. Similarly, as regards cloth, full decontrol was introduced on 25 April, but free movement was not allowed. Partly because of this and partly because of

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speculative activities, prices rocketted up, but about the end of May there was a distinct fall. At present, the prices seem to be somewhere in the vicinity of 25 to 50 per cent. higher than the controlled prices. A portion of it could perhaps be justified on the ground of increased price of cotton. The report of the Tariff Board is likely to be issued shortly when we might know what, according to them, would be the fair price and what is the margin between the present price and the [price] suggested by the Tariff Board. I feel that there could have been some fall in price if steps could have been taken to deal effectively with the smuggling of cloth into Pakistan.

It is not correct to assume as it is done in certain quarters that the United Kingdom has made great progress in production. The following is the production index of a few important countries, the index for 1937 being 100.

	1947
UK	109
USA	165
Canada	163
Denmark	112

From this it will be seen that other countries have done far better than the UK and whatever the UK has achieved during the last year has been with the help of the industrialists. Coal which has been nationalised has not shown promising results. The production figures of coal are:

1939 .. 19,588,000 metric tons monthly average
1947 .. 16,972,000 „ „ „

Against this, American figures are as follows:—

1939 .. 33,743,000 metric tons monthly average
1947 .. 51,105,000 „ „ „

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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PRIME MINISTER'S NOTE ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

Prime Minister's Secretariat

We have had two days' informal discussions regarding the economic crisis. For the present we have decided to have consultations with the economists in the Government of India, some

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industrialists, some labour leaders and the Governor of the Reserve Bank. These consultations will no doubt help us somewhat to arrive at decisions.

I feel, however, that whatever our decisions may be, it is quite essential to build up machinery for the purpose of watching carefully the economic situation and advise the Cabinet. I had suggested in a previous note the creation of a Ministry of Social and Economic Affairs. At that time I had not clearly thought out this matter as to what the functions of such a Ministry might be. It has been pointed out by some of my colleagues in the Cabinet that such a Ministry might overlap with other Ministries. More especially if such a new Ministry has any executive functions, this might create difficulties. I think there is force in that argument.

It has been suggested by some that a committee of the Cabinet might deal with the matter. There is no harm in having a committee, but it seems to me clear that we do not go far in any direction by having such a committee. The real problem before us has been how to isolate the heavy responsibilities of running a department of Government from a full consideration of economic trends and developments. No Minister today has much spare time. He is busy with his ministerial duties and day-to-day executive and administrative functions. At the most he can give thought to economic matters in so far as they relate to his own Ministry. Occasionally, of course, he may discuss with his colleagues, as we have done, the general economic situation. But this is rather an amateurish way of tackling the most serious problem we have. We must have concentrated attention.

This seems to me to require a Minister who can give this concentrated attention without being burdened with any departmental duties or executive responsibilities. Also that there should be a Board or Council of expert advisers whose sole function should be to watch every aspect of the economic situation and advise on it. The decisions and executive action would either be by individual Ministers in their respective Ministries and Departments or by the Cabinet as a whole.

I suggest, therefore, that we should proceed on these lines:

(1) The appointment of a Minister for Social and Economic Affairs. He should have no administrative or executive functions. He will keep in touch with all Ministries concerned with such affairs. He will, whenever necessary, confer with each Minister separately or together

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and thus try to bring about a certain co-ordination between the various Ministries and quick decisions. The decisions, I might add, would be not his but of the Minister concerned in each Ministry. Where necessary, the matter might be brought up before the Cabinet. But normally this need not be necessary when the Cabinet has laid down a general policy. The function, therefore, of the Minister for Social & Economic Affairs should be largely that of keeping a watch, co-ordination, and continuous consideration of economic affairs.

(2) A Council of Economic Experts to advise the Minister for Social & Economic Affairs and the Cabinet. They will collect all necessary data and statistics, co-ordinate them and look at the picture as a whole and not departmentally. They will be an advisory body purely. The Cabinet may put any matter before them and they can collect the material and advise on it.

I suggest that something of this kind should be done now and it should be done soon. This will prepare the ground for building up a suitable machinery which is for the consideration of economic problems, which is so essential in a modern State. At the same time this machinery will not be an executive machinery and will thus not interfere with the discretion and activities of other Ministers and Departments.

I would request Ministers to keep this matter completely secret.

J. Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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SARDAR PATEL'S NOTE IN REPLY TO THE ONE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

I have read with great care and attention the Prime Minister's note on the economic situation in this country. I myself have been giving thought to this problem for a long time and feel that, if we are unable to find any real and practical solution of this all-important problem and make any reasonable and appreciable advance towards it, we will have no justification for our holding to our position of trust and responsibility. It is only fair to my

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colleagues, therefore, that I set them down on paper for their consideration.

2. The economic malaise from which the country has been suffering both during and after the war has persisted not for any lack of consideration by the Cabinet but because we have not been able effectively to implement the policies which we have settled from time to time and have not been able to ensure adequate co-ordination between the three parties involved, viz. Government, industry and labour, or secure the willing co-operation of industry and labour. My own feeling is that there has been a lack of firmness and definiteness in our action even when there has been precision in our ideas.

3. Our main objective on the economic front is to restore normal conditions in trade, commerce and industry as soon as possible. With this end in view, we have devised various measures; we abolished control over food and cloth; we revised our import and export policy; we formulated a plan for industrial truce; we also devised an economic programme; but unfortunately, we have, to a large extent, failed in following up the decisions we reached. For this failure, I feel that a great measure of responsibility must attach to our inability to devise an effective overall machinery for supervision over the implementation of our policies and decisions. I should like to state, however, that I am not referring in this context to any governmental machinery but to an expert organisation to which we could hand over implementation of details after formulating our policies. The result of this has been to create a sense of frustration in industry and among investors. Industrial enterprise is completely at a standstill and confidence has been so much shaken that production has suffered and if today we go to the market for a loan we can be pretty certain of failing to raise any substantial amount. In the transitional stage through which India is passing and having regard to the limitations which have been imposed on its economy by that transitional stage and the difficult legacies of the war, I feel convinced that what is immediately necessary is to restore confidence among the public and to give everybody a visible proof that we intend action and are in earnest about our policies and programmes. We have also to show that once we reach a decision we stand by it and are not prepared to modify it merely because one of the parties to the transaction or to the implementation of our decisions decides to back out or wields the big stick of strikes, lock-outs etc. In other words, what is required is not an academic approach to the problem,

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but a practical view of the action required to implement the economic policy of the Cabinet.

3. The Prime Minister has referred to the question of controls. The decision to raise the control over food and cloth was reached after very careful consideration. It was then realised that prices were bound to go up, but at the same time it was felt that an equilibrium would be reached with the co-operation of trade and industry. So far as the food commodities are concerned, control has generally been welcomed by the people and has not resulted in prices rocketting up to any unprecedented heights. They have now generally reached an equilibrium and I think, although the Food Member was at one time very anxious, he now feels that the period of anxiety is over and things are settling down fairly satisfactorily.

As regards cloth, there is no doubt that soon after decontrol the prices went up higher than was expected by the trade, but I feel that some vigilance and timely action on our part could have prevented or at least checked this rise. I understand that prices are now on downward level.

As regards smuggling of cloth, the blame must be shared by blacklegs in industry and trade and by the corrupt, inefficient transport staff and the total absence of any good machinery to check or prevent smuggling. This is the impression which I have gathered as a result of the investigations which have been conducted by the Special Police Establishment into many cases which it has detected, and also as a result of the reports which I have received from responsible Ministers both in the States and in the provinces. Railway parcels and railway engines are being indiscriminately used to promote the activities of smugglers. Even otherwise, I have no doubt that the policy of decontrol could have been implemented much more satisfactorily but for the transport bottleneck. Lord Mountbatten in his note has commented adversely on the bad condition of railway running in India. I feel that the state of affairs to which he has referred has to be drastically remedied before we can make any satisfactory headway with the distribution of commodities in the normal way.

4. We have also to bear in mind our budgetary position. The expenditure on Kashmir operations and on Jammu and Kashmir State itself is mounting. Hyderabad is likely to involve us in heavy expenditure as well. We have to spend a considerable amount on the relief and rehabilitation of refugees. At the same time, we have to bear all the stress and strain of an economic

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crisis and of the effort to resolve it. In the face of this mounting expenditure, it is our bounden duty to stimulate increased income of the State and increased production. This will not be possible if we go on indulging in pin-pricks against a class which, in present circumstances, is eager to assist and ever so willing to do as we tell it. If we delay in mobilising all available resources to increase income and increase production, I see nothing but disaster facing this country.

5. On the whole, I feel that what is required is at once the setting up of a committee of experts which should be entrusted with the task of implementing the economic and industrial policy which Government have already laid down. This committee of experts should consist of representatives of Government, industrialists and economists to push through our production programme in accordance with the policy which has been formulated. On the labour side, we have already laid down the broad features of our policy regarding industrial truce and certain consequential questions. We must implement that policy at all costs if the country is to survive the crisis through which it is passing. I have no doubt that if we approach capitalists, industrialists and economists in the right manner we shall achieve their co-operation not only in the production drive that is essential but also in securing for labour a just reward for their exertions. Among them there are patriots who are capable of rising above the mercenary motive which is generally attributed to them, see no reason why we should not enlist the co-operation of such men in the cause of the country and in the national emergency which faces us, especially when we know that we are very poor in manpower and resources.

6. If the proposal regarding the setting up of a committee of experts commends itself to my colleagues, I would suggest immediately the calling of a conference of select industrialists and economists to advise on the best means of implementing our production programme. From out of this meeting we can select the proposed committee of experts. I am quite convinced that at the ministerial level it is impossible for one Minister to deal with the whole economic programme and to be in charge of our economic affairs. What is required is a small committee of the Cabinet to supervise the implementation of the economic programme practically from day to day. I should not like this committee to exceed three. My own feeling is that the one reason for the failure of the Economic Committee of the Cabinet to deal adequately with the problem is its unwieldy composition and our

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failure to provide for a proper secretariat for that Committee. Such secretariat assistance should have come to it from the Cabinet Secretariat.

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New Delhi
9 July 1948

My dear Sardar,

I have just seen the note circulated by you to the Cabinet regarding the present economic situation. As regards the general seriousness of the situation, I am in entire agreement with you. But I regret I cannot agree with you as regards your analysis of the situation or the solutions proposed by you. As the whole subject is likely to come up for discussion before the Cabinet, I do not propose to weary you with my views at this stage.

There is however a reference in your note to the condition of the Railways in India about which I wish to say a word. You say "Lord Mountbatten in his note has commented adversely on the bad condition of railway running in India." I may perhaps tell you that immediately after this note was circulated by Lord Mountbatten to the Cabinet, I had occasion to discuss it with him. I found that the note had been based on certain misleading statements placed before him by a British officer of our Railways whom I had to sack, and Lord Mountbatten in the course of the discussion practically withdrew the comments he made in his note.

You will be interested to read the following extract from a letter I received from Lord Mountbatten a few days before he left the country:

> "The firmness with which you have handled matters connected with your onerous portfolio has been a source of admiration to me and to many others. You and your Ministry could well be proud of the way in which you have kept the transport and railways of the country going in spite of the difficulties with which you have been beset."

Yours sincerely,
John Matthai

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
10 July 1948

My dear Dr. Matthai,

Thank you for your letter of 9 July 1948 regarding my note on the present economic situation. As regards the condition of the railways in India, it was far from my intention to minimise the contribution which you have made to its administration. My object was to draw attention to the fact that, in spite of your best efforts, conditions are bad. There is a general complaint on this matter, and I thought it would only be fair on my part to give expression to this feeling.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. John Matthai, CIE
Minister for Transport and Railways
New Delhi

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New Delhi
12 June 1948

My dear Gadgil,

I send herewith a note regarding the oil position. I feel that we must take a Cabinet decision on this very soon. I personally see little prospect of Government exploiting oil resources of this country on its own. We have to do it through a private agency. Even private resources in India are lamentably lacking and as far as I can see, the only way to bring about speedy results—and we do want speedy results if we are to be saved from the clutches of the foreign countries—is to promote an Indo-foreign corporation. I should like you to study this question as soon as possible, and when you are ready we could perhaps discuss as to the best way of solving it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. N. V. Gadgil
Minister for Works, Mines and Powers
New Delhi

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ENCLOSURE

The position of oil requirement for the Indian Union is becoming important not only because of the civilian requirement but the Army is also dependent on the import of oil. Any improvement in the Indian economy is also dependent on the supply of the same.

Present proved reserves of oil in India are very small as the only oilfield in production is the Assam oilfield producing 200,000 tons per annum. It is not yet proved so far as to what other areas could produce oil. There is a feeling that there may be oil in Rajputana, the newly formed Union of Saurashtra and Kutch. But there has been no prospecting and, therefore, it could not be said with certainty what are the chances. There is a possibility of some oil in the eastern region around Tripura which is supposed to be a continuation of the Assam and Burma oilfields but no prospecting has been done in that area also. Some of these areas were given to certain foreign interests for exploration but due to the war no progress was made.

The actual facilities available for exploration and prospecting of oil in the Indian Dominion are very meagre. We have hardly any geologists who have prospected oil [on a] commercial scale nor do we have the equipment. Generally oil exploration and prospecting is one of the trickiest problems. Crores of rupees are wasted and even then sometimes no oil is discovered. It is reported that already some of the oil companies have spent over Rs. 5 crores for oil prospecting during the last few years and have not been successful so far.

Even amongst foreign oil companies two groups are the most predominant producers of the world excluding Russia, viz. American and British groups. The geologists are very largely connected with either of these two groups and there is a certain amount of secrecy which they do not easily divulge.

Under these circumstances it seems impractical that oil prospecting could be taken by the Government themselves. The question, therefore, arises as to what is the best alternative. It seems inevitable that this has to be under the aegis of Indo-foreign co-operation. On what terms that co-operation should be sought is a question which can only be decided after the policy is settled.

Any co-operation by foreign interests would require stability and a long-period arrangement, say, approximately 50 years from the time of production. As is well known, exploration and prospecting alone would take quite a few years though greater effort may be made to expedite the same. As is known even in potentially proved areas the chances of success are 30 to 1, while in India the chances may be 50 to 1 of finding oil, and as such no foreign company would

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co-operate unless they are assured not only of a chance to recover money lost in exploration and prospecting but also to earn reasonable profit over a number of years.

Consequently, the fees for the exploration and prospecting period should be nominal so that they do not throw an additional burden on the explorer during the initial stages.

Secondly, a sufficiently long period of tenure has to be assured. The present industrial policy announced by the Government falls for a review after ten years in case of mineral oils. It must be realised that this has to be kept in abeyance and the Government, under the policy announced, has the power to do so. A mining lease for a period has to be entered [into] to assure stability as without this foreign interests may not be prepared to co-operate. Some of these foreign interests had rather a bad experience in some countries and therefore to ensure proper co-operation an assurance would be desirable. Since our aim is to develop the resources in the shortest possible period, and we do not want to hand over entirely our resources to foreign firms, Indo-foreign co-operation seems to be the best basis.

Once this is agreed negotiations may have to be started with private Indian enterprise to secure foreign co-operation. It is probable that important foreign concerns may not view with equanimity any proposal where they have to participate in capital with the Government.

A decision, therefore, on the matter is necessary.

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New Delhi
16 July 1948

My dear Shanmukham,

I am sending herewith the file regarding the exemption from income-tax of perquisite regarding rent-free residences supplied to Hon'ble Ministers. I think I am correct in saying that the intention was that this should not be liable to income-tax, but unfortunately in the hurry in which the Bill was rushed through, this point was not made clear. If my recollection is correct, then the point arises how best to secure it. I myself feel that an amendment of the Act would merely invite unnecessary attention and criticism. I notice from the file that exemption in respect of rent-free quarters of Governor-General, Governors and Chief Commissioners has been secured by a special notification under Section 60 of the Income-tax Act. If this is so, I see no reason why we should not resort to the same device in respect of our own

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rent-free accommodation. The three instances provide, in my opinion, sufficient justification for resorting to it.

If you agree, we could then take it up in the Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri R. K. Shanmukham Chetty
Minister for Finance
New Delhi

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New Delhi
31 July 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am enclosing a statement which I have sent to the Prime Minister with a request that it should be read at the meeting of the party when it considers the Hindu Code Bill.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

ENCLOSURE

The Bill codifying the Hindu Law is now before the Constituent Assembly sitting as Legislature. Apart from the merits of the measure there are certain aspects which require consideration. The Bill embodies the recommendations of a committee which went round the country and recorded evidence. That evidence is overwhelmingly against many of the most important recommendations of the committee. It is true that the progressive elements in the country have supported it but the entire population will be affected by its drastic provisions which introduce fundamental changes in the personal law of the Hindus as it has been prevalent in the different parts of the country. There is a large section which under the same law is governed in many matters by a customary law. That section is equally affected by the Bill. The question is whether the present Constituent Assembly, sitting as the Central legislature, combining the functions both of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State, should take up and pass such a controversial measure to which very large sections of the people directly affected are opposed. As stated above, the evidence recorded by the committee, whose report is the basis of this Bill, was overwhelmingly against its most important proposals. The Bill has not been circulated for public opinion by the Assembly. The Bill was taken

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up on 9 April 1948. That day happened to be the last day of the session and that hour was practically the last hour of the session. As was to be expected, it was referred to a Select Committee, which has met and whose report may come up before the next session of the Assembly, commencing on 9 August. The Assembly too is hardly competent to deal with such a fundamental matter. It was elected for the special purpose of framing the Constitution of India and naturally the electorate had only the framing of the Constitution before it, when it elected its representatives. By a makeshift arrangement, the Assembly, so elected, has been converted into a Legislature, combining in it the function both of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State, thus doing away with such safeguard as a second chamber may provide against hurried and hasty legislation. The matter is of fundamental importance to everyone who is governed by the Hindu Law. It substitutes for the concepts and the reasons underlying that law, new concepts and new ideas, which are not only foreign to Hindu Law but may cause disruption in every family. Such a proposal has never been placed before the electorate, which has never had an opportunity to express itself on it. Whatever discussion on the merits of the measure has taken place will, on an analysis, be found to consist of progressive elements being in favour and the vast bulk of the Hindu mass opposed to it.

No serious or widespread effort appears to have been made to educate and instruct the masses of people in favour of the proposed measure. Its passage, therefore, will be tantamount to forcing a measure of a most fundamental character, introducing basic changes in their personal law, on the Hindus in furtherance of the progressive ideas of a small, if not a microscopic minority, and all this is to be done without reference to the electorate and by a Legislature, which is competent only for drawing a Constitution but not elected with a view to effecting amendments in the personal law of the largest community in the country.

There is, besides, no such urgency about the matter. The Hindus have put up with their personal law for a long time and may well wait till the new Constitution comes into force. It is not a long way off when the electorate may be given a chance by the parties participating in the election to express itself on it.

The Assembly will be taking a great responsibility in passing such a measure in the circumstances stated above.

31-7-48 Rajendra Prasad

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COPIES OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD AND PANDIT NEHRU ON THE HINDU CODE BILL

New Delhi
21 July 1948

My dear Jawaharlalji,

A deputation of eight members of the Select Committee on the Hindu Code led by Bakshi Tek Chand have just seen me. They have represented that the proposed Code introduced some very fundamental and farreaching changes in the Hindu Law as it has been accepted by the vast majority of Hindus up till now. The Bill has never been considered at a meeting of the Party and it was put up for second reading on the last day of the last session during the last hour and was referred to a Select Committee. Fifteen members out of 20 have been attending the meetings of the Select Committee and the majority of them who came to see me feel that it would not be proper to rush this Bill through the next session of the Assembly. Apart from the merits of the measure and apart from the considerations above mentioned, my feeling is that a measure of such farreaching consequences about which there is much difference of opinion, need not be passed by the Constituent Assembly sitting as a legislature. In the first place, the present legislature is a make-shift arrangement. The Constituent Assembly was never intended to be a legislative assembly, but to avoid fresh elections it was converted into a legislative assembly. Whatever safeguard there was against hurried legislation on account of a second chamber has also been removed. The Committee, which held an enquiry, recorded a good deal of evidence and that evidence was overwhelmingly against the proposals generally which now constitute the clauses of the present Bill. The evidence has been analysed in great detail in the note of dissent by Dr. Dwarka Nath Mitter. The matter has never been placed before the electorate and I am not aware that any propaganda has been carried on to convert the bulk of the people in favour of the provisions of the Bill. In these circumstances, it seems to me that it would not be in keeping with the fundamental principles of a democratic Assembly to undertake legislation for effecting basic changes in the personal law of a vast majority of the inhabitants of this country which has been accepted and followed ever since the days when the Smritis were composed or at least when the commentaries were written on them. I would, therefore, suggest that this subject might very well form one of the items of our election manifesto and the electorate should be consulted at the next election before it is placed before the Legislature. In any case, the present Constituent Assembly sitting as a Central Legislature should not take it up and rush it as was done at the time of the second reading. I have given my own reactions to the situation

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that has arisen and would request you to consider the question from this aspect.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

New Delhi
22 July 1948

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 21 July about the Hindu Code. I do not exactly remember whether this matter was put up formally before the party or not. But I have a distinct recollection of repeated discussions about it in the course of the last year and a half. Few contemplated pieces of legislation have been so thoroughly thrashed out and publicly discussed than this Bill. It has been considered by the Cabinet on more than one occasion. It has been considered by the Executive of the party certainly. There is no doubt that a large section of orthodox opinion opposes it. There is also no doubt that the so-called socially progressive Hindus are anxious and eager for it. The matter has been pending for a very long time and has been repeatedly postponed. At last an assurance was given that it would be introduced in the last session and taken up in the next. The Bill was introduced. To try to smother it now or postpone it would create some kind of a crisis and the reputation of the Congress would undoubtedly be affected. As it is, it is being stated widely that the Congress is a reactionary and a very conservative body now, which dares not face any radical change. We are called not only socially reactionary but a police State which suppresses civil liberties and the like. In this context if we push out [this] Bill, we shall not only confirm this growing conviction of our excessive conservatism in India but would also go down in the mind of foreigners outside India. I confess I do not see how in these circumstances we can go back on what we have done after much argument and debate and not proceed with the Bill.

Apart from these considerations, the question is one of merit. The Cabinet has declared itself in favour of it twice at least. Personally, I am entirely in favour of the general principles embodied in it. Are we therefore to give up something that we consider right and on which so much labour has been spent, because some people object?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

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New Delhi
24 July 1948

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I have received your letter dated 22 July 1948 about the Hindu Code. I do not propose to say anything about the merits of the measure but that is not because there is nothing to be said, but I consider at this stage any such discussion unnecessary, if not irrelevant. I am definitely informed the matter has never been considered by the Party. The contemplated legislation is based on the report of the Committee which recorded evidence, and that evidence is overwhelmingly against the proposals contained in the Bill. Whatever discussion there has been was while the Committee was going round and recording this evidence. I am not aware that the Bill, as proposed, has been subjected to any critical examination by the public at large on any extensive scale. It is admitted that it contains proposals for very fundamental changes. I do not think the Congress, the AICC or the Working Committee has ever given any thought either to the subject or to the provisions of the Bill. It has certainly never been included in our election manifesto. The present Constituent Assembly is hardly a body to take up this fundamental legislation for the simple reason that it has not been convened to deal with personal law of any particular community but for drawing up a Constitution for the State. I do not know when and where we made a promise or gave an assurance about the Bill. If any assurance was given to the Constituent Assembly by the Government, the objection to the competence of these bodies to take up this matter at this time and during this session without any reference to the electorate and the country at large remains. I know that there are some people who want it but if you were to take the people at large, I am afraid, a vast majority would not go for it. So it is not so much giving up something which you consider right because some people object to it but forcing something on the people at large because some people consider it to be right and want it. Apart from these considerations, I might also mention that it is bound to rouse bitter feelings and will have repercussions which may affect the chances of the Congress at the next election. I am not impressed by the fact that some people regard the Congress as reactionary or conservative nor do I think that anything and everything which some people regard as reactionary or conservative is necessarily bad and everything that they call progressive is necessarily good. We have to weigh how it will be received by the vast bulk of Hindu public against what foreigners outside India and those who call themselves 'progressive' would say. My feeling is strong on the point that we shall be riding roughshod on the cherished sentiments of the vast bulk of our people and that without having any warrant or sanction from them simply because we consider certain things to be right.

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The question of civil liberties stands on altogether a different footing. I do not think there will be any difference on that point as between conservatives and progressives. In fact, most of the so-called 'conservatives' are more concerned about it than the so-called 'progressives'. I will, therefore, request you to consider it and not allow a major crisis to be created in the Party and in the country on a matter which cannot on its merit claim the priority that belongs to so many other things which we have not been able to take up. In any case, there has got to be prolonged discussion and this short session which we are going to have may not have the necessary time for it.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

New Delhi
27 July 1948

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have just received your letter of 24 July about the Hindu Code. I really do not know what I can do in the matter. The Bill is before the Assembly and it is for the Assembly to consider it and decide this way or that way. It is not being hurriedly put before the Assembly. The Cabinet has considered it on at least two, if not more, occasions and you yourself say the matter is one on which there is deep feeling. It is for this reason that this has been kept pending for a long time and references have been made to all public bodies interested in it. It has been discussed in the Press.

It is perfectly true that the AICC or the Working Committee have not considered it. Nor is it in the election manifesto. Normally such matters of legislation have not been considered by the Working Committee or the AICC. Considering that this question has been before the country for the last two or three years, if members of the AICC or the Working Committee wished to consider them, they could have certainly done so. This applies to the party too, which has been watching every stage of this legislation, and yet did not consider it worthwhile to discuss it at a formal party meeting when any member could have brought it forward. The matter will no doubt come up before the party in some form or other. On previous occasions when similar matters came up before the party, the general rule followed was that there should be no party mandate and members should be free to speak or vote as they liked. It is for the party to decide what they will do in this matter. At this stage even the Cabinet cannot thus go back on its decisions unless the party so directs them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dr. Rajendra Prasad

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New Delhi
25 July 1948

My dear Rafi,

This morning a person entered my house in the dirtiest clothes possible and looked like more of an intruder than anybody else. My peons and my guards took him as such and would have also dealt with him as such had he not announced that he was a telegraph peon and had telegrams to deliver.

I am sure you will agree that it is a disgrace to us all if telegraph peons, or for that matter other peons, go about in such filthy condition. The telegraph peons have to go to embassies, consulates etc. I wonder what they must be thinking of the standard of cleanliness and smartness of our postal peons when they see them in this condition. I think in the capital city of Delhi we must insist on a better turnout of our staff. I suggest, therefore, that you may issue instructions that in Delhi every telegraph and postal peon must be properly dressed and must be in clean clothes. I see no difficulty in regard to the issue of uniforms. If there are any difficulties, they must be overcome in the fair name of this country.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai
Minister for Communications
New Delhi

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New Delhi
25 July 1948

My dear Rafi,

I had been finding it quite difficult sometimes to get in touch with my officers; either their telephones are out of order or somehow or other I can't get the connection. I know this is a frequent complaint with Delhi telephones, but the most unfortunate part of it is that it holds up the disposal of urgent work,

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sometimes by hours. Sometimes I can't even get them on the telephone for a day or two in spite of reports to 'Complaints'.

I would, therefore, suggest that all Hon'ble Ministers, their Private Secretaries and Secretaries to Government should be connected with each other on a separate telephone system altogether. This would not only facilitate inter-communication, but also ensure some secrecy. I see no other way out of the present difficulties.

If you agree, I hope you will have this matter examined and put through expeditiously.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai
New Delhi

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New Delhi
26 July 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I received your two letters of yesterday's date this morning. I was surprised about the telegraph messenger's uniform because once I myself had noticed it and had directed that they should be given uniforms. Today I enquired why the uniform was not supplied and was told that the Finance Department had turned the proposal down on the ground that uniform may not be supplied to temporary employees. However, instructions have been given for the immediate issue of uniforms and before the day is closed everyone would get his uniform.

I am sorry about the telephone inconvenience. I have asked them to put in a special line connecting your house with your private secretary that will not pass the exchange and you can always contact him and there will be perfect secrecy as it will be a direct connection. Meanwhile, the question of having a special exchange will also be considered.

Yours sincerely,
Rafi Ahmed Kidwai

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
17 August 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Shankar returned yesterday after discussions in Lucknow regarding officers whom we wanted in Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara and for the State Unions.

2. It now appears that Harpal Singh is unwilling to come to Delhi for reasons mostly personal and domestic. I feel that we should not have an unwilling man, howsoever good he may be. UP have offered Pandit Rameshwar Dayal, who is at present Collector of Saharanpur. He is very well spoken of by many officers whom Shankar contacted at Lucknow. He is reported to have dealt with the refugee and law and order situation in Saharanpur with skill, firmness and efficiency. In these circumstances, if you agree, we may accept Rameshwar Dayal for Delhi. I would be glad to have your views some time today, so that we may inform the UP Government finally of our choice.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

I do not know Rameshwar Dayal. But please go ahead if you are satisfied. There is not much choice.

J. Nehru

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Simla-E
26 August 1948

My dear Sardarji,

Some days ago I wrote to you a letter regarding the reservation of seats for Harijans in the IAS and IPS. In face of this reservation Sikhs shall also demand reservation even in Provincial Services and it will be difficult for us to reject their demand.

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If you approve this, it shall not be in the interest of the country. I, therefore, request you to reconsider this decision. I am awaiting a reply very anxiously.

Yours sincerely,
Gopichand Bhargava

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
2 September 1948

My dear Gopichand,

Please refer to your letter dated 26 August 1948. I do not see how the question of reservation of Harijans affects the Sikhs in the Punjab. As you know, we have definitely set ourselves against any reservations. Scheduled Castes were the sole exception because of their backwardness. This would be apparent from the fact that in the last competitive examination in 1947, out of 529 candidates who qualified, i.e. who got marks above 45 per cent, only two were Harijans and even they were so low down in the list that we had to make an exception in order to take them in. The Sikhs as a community are advanced in education and from the point of view of population also, they have a more substantial percentage in Punjab than Harijans.

There is, therefore, no case for any reservation in their favour merely because we have agreed to reservation for Scheduled Castes.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Gopichand Bhargava
Premier, East Punjab
Simla

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New Delhi
11 September 1948

My dear Sardarji,

The file which I enclose herein relates to the representation which Mr. N. Dandekar, ICS, Member, Central Board of Revenue,

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has forwarded to you on the subject of his application for permission to retire from the service. Mr. Dandekar has adopted the rather unusual procedure of sending me a copy of his letter to you, and that too in a sealed cover addressed to me by name, the intention obviously being that neither the Chairman, Central Board of Revenue, nor the Finance Secretary (through whom it came to me) should see it. I cannot imagine that your message to Dandekar (said to have been conveyed through our colleague Gadgil) could possibly have been understood as meaning that he was either directed or permitted by you to go over the head of the Finance Minister, or over the heads of his official superiors. I presume Mr. Dandekar has exceeded your instructions to him in this matter, and I should like to point this out to him in the interests of official discipline.

As regards the merits of Mr. Dandekar's complaints, I would invite your attention to the Finance Secretary's detailed comments with which I am in agreement. It strikes me as most undignified and unworthy of the traditions of a great service for Mr. Dandekar to have adopted this method of ventilating his grievances. The Finance Minister (Mr. Chetty) did consider his name on both the occasions when Mr. Dandekar imagines he was deliberately ignored. On the first occasion Satyawadi was selected as, in view of the urgent and important post-partition problems relating to our new land frontiers and the institution of new land customs posts, it was considered that a senior Customs Collector with experience of preventive work should be selected for the post of Customs Member. Satyawadi had 29 years' service in the Customs Service, and was then the senior-most Collector of Customs and had about eight years' continuous experience as collector when he was selected. Dandekar with his total service of 16 years, and just about two years' experience as an Assistant Collector of Customs, and that too nearly ten years ago (1937-39), was not considered by Mr. Chetty as a more suitable choice than Satyawadi. Similarly, when the Chairman of the Board was appointed, Padhi was selected, as he is senior to Dandekar in every respect, and was also considered by both Chetty and Narahari Rao to be the better of the two for that post. Downgrading of the post of Member to Joint Secretary's status was part of the reorganisation of the Finance Ministry, and I cannot imagine that it was intended to spite Dandekar. The insinuation that the then Finance Member was unduly influenced by the senior officers responsible for advising him is unjustified.

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I feel sure that the rather unusual procedure that he has adopted on the present occasion was not authorised by you.

Yours sincerely,
K. C. Neogy

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi
12 September 1948

My dear Neogy,

Thank you for your letter dated 11 September 1948 regarding Dandekar.

It was some days ago that Gadgil mentioned to me that Dandekar had applied for leave preparatory to retirement and for permission to retire prematurely from the ICS. He also told me that Dandekar had certain grievances. I naturally did not like the idea of an officer retiring with a sense of grievance against our action, so far as it can be helped. I, therefore, told Gadgil that, if I knew what those grievances were, I might be able to help, but that the best way of doing so would be if he could send a representation on the subject in the usual way.

It appears, however, that because Dandekar had finally made up his mind, he did not wish to make a representation; instead, he thought fit to send me a letter containing his reasons for the step which he had decided upon. You are quite right in presuming that this was not what I had intended. At the same time, I feel that his action in sending a copy to you is a proof of his bona fides rather than any desire on his part to circumvent your authority or bypass you.

His sending a copy to you in a sealed cover also seems to me to be capable of a more charitable explanation. His complaints directly involved (whether rightly or wrongly is a different matter altogether) both the Chairman of the Central Board of Revenue, Mr. Padhi, and your present Secretary, Mr. Menon, who admittedly advised H. M. Finance on his case previously. If he did not wish these two officers to see the contents of this letter to me, the copy of which he was sending to you, it was

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natural for him to have tried to send it to you direct. It was open to Mr. Dandekar to have seen you personally and to have represented these matters orally to you, or even to me. Quite obviously, it was not necessary for him to have made such verbal representation to you either through the Secretary or the Chairman of the Central Board of Revenue. The mere fact that, instead of making a verbal representation, he has made a written one should not alter that position. It was not a regular representation which he was bound to send through the Chairman of the Central Board of Revenue or the Finance Secretary.

I now come to the last point, about which a grievance has been made by the Finance Secretary in his note, which I regret to observe has departed from the usual Secretariat standards of objectivity, namely, Mr. Dandekar's complaint that "the officers whose advice was most effective in assisting the then H.M. Finance to decide on each of the three occasions mentioned above, were avowedly anti-ICS." As you know, the Pool consists of ICS and non-ICS officers. It would be impossible to deny that a certain rivalry has developed between these two groups of officers. The subject of seniority between ICS and non-ICS officers of the Pool has been a controversial point of long-standing; it has given rise to considerable heart-burning. That is a fact which none of us can ignore, though it is undoubtedly a most unfortunate feature. Chetty's advisers at the time happened to be non-ICS officers. It is again natural, therefore, for Dandekar to feel that Chetty acted on one-sided advice. Whether that feeling was well-founded is, I feel, quite a different matter from its existence. I think we cannot ignore the human side of this whole matter and am inclined to regard Dandekar's remarks merely as an expression of that feeling. I do not think he was inclined to be insubordinate or offensive. Indeed, his decision to quit the Service without making a formal representation, in my opinion, justifies us in taking a more charitable view of his action. This is all that I have tried to do in what I have stated in this letter. I hope you will not take it as in any way justifying the feeling which Dandekar has expressed.

As regards the merits of the case, I am having the office to examine the points raised by Dandekar. They are relevant for purposes of his application for premature retirement. I would suggest, however, if you agree, that our correspondence on this matter may be treated as personal. I am, therefore, not sending your letter to the office but only the file and am asking them

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merely to note on the facts and not to take the tone of the Finance Secretary's note into consideration while noting.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. K. C. Neogy
Finance Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
26 August 1948

My dear Gadgil,

I have seen the note which you left with Shankar regarding Dandekar. I think the best course would be for him to memorialise. The question will have to be considered by the Finance Ministry in consultation with us and we could then intervene. Otherwise, it seems very difficult to reopen these old cases.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. N. V. Gadgil
Minister for Works, Mines and Power
New Delhi

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Madras
10 September 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I hope you will excuse me for writing this letter to you, as my object in writing this is to bring to your notice a glaring injustice which is being done in the recruitment of judges to the Madras High Court. In your telegraphic reply to Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar,[1] you declared it to be the policy of the Government to recruit judges to High Courts from the Bar, from the ICS group of district judges, and from the non-ICS group of district judges including directly recruited district judges, treating them as separate and distinct sources for recruitment.

[1] Member, Andhra PCC; AICC; member, CA; Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha and later Speaker; Governor of Bihar, 1962-67

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This was also the policy adopted even by the British Government for reasons of efficiency and with a view to avoid lopsidedness in the High Court and in order to secure the best element found in all these groups with their different and varied experiences. This policy, as declared by you, met with the approval of all people as it gives representation to all categories of people connected with law. I may be permitted to remind you that on a representation by me and Shri M. A. Ayyangar you were kind enough to instruct your secretariat to call for names on that basis. But I am sorry to state that the instructions do not seem to have been carried out uptil now. On the other hand the Madras Government seems to have ignored the policy as declared by you. Ignoring this policy means ignoring the claims of efficient and senior district judges in the non-ICS group, including directly recruited district judges, who have served for a long time with a brilliant record. It is my view and the view of Shri M. A. Ayyangar, and I know it is also your view in declaring the policy as stated above, that local exigencies and considerations should not be allowed to interfere in the matter of recruitment of judges to High Courts. No judge should be given room to feel that he is under an obligation to any individual or party for his appointment as a judge. All the recent appointments to the Madras High Court are either from the ICS group of district judges or from the Bar, and not from the non-ICS group of district judges. This is against your policy. The Madras Government has not uptil now sent up any names from the non-ICS group of district judges, including the directly recruited district judges. I am bringing this to your notice so that your policy may be strictly enforced by calling for names at least this time from the non-ICS group of district judges including directly recruited district judges, for recruitment to the High Court.

I know it is cruel on my part to encroach on your precious time in these days of stress and strain on you. May I request you kindly to spare a bit of your personal attention to set right this injustice to the non-ICS group of district judges by insisting on the best qualified names from that group also?

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
N. G. Ranga

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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PS.

I have come to know after reaching Madras that there are some more vacancies in the High Court and that the Bar has again a chance. Till now not even one has been appointed from the undeveloped and much neglected area of Rayalaseema--the western third of the Andhra. May I request you to see that at least one is selected from among the lawyers born in and hailing from Rayalaseema?

N. G. Ranga

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New Delhi
14 September 1948

My dear Ranga,

Thank you for your letter of 10 September 1948.

Your letter shows, if I may say so, some confusion of thought. If we say that we must have the best men for the High Court, it is obvious that we cannot insist on nomination from particular groups. What one has to ensure is that the best candidate available from amongst the various groups is recommended irrespective of the group to which he belongs. In other words, there can be no vacancy reserved for a particular group.

I notice that to the groups of ICS and non-ICS district judges and the Bar, you have added representation according to the geographical area, and that too a section of a linguistic area. I am sure you will realise that in this way the position becomes impossible.

It is obvious that in determining whether the best possible candidate has been nominated, we have to rely on the judgment of the Chief Justice, the Provincial Premier and the Governor. If we get unanimous recommendations from these three authorities, unless a recommendation is manifestly improper, it is impossible for us to set it aside.

In considering the appointments made to the High Court, you must bear in mind the points which I have mentioned above, and then appreciate the difficulties of the Central Government.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Prof. N. G. Ranga, MCA
Madras

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CHAPTER XIV

CONGRESS PRESIDENTSHIP TUSSLE

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Camp Pilani
16 September 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Since coming here I have had two attacks of asthma in two nights but I am feeling better today. I hope the climate of this place which is dry at present will help me to recoup soon.

I have received a complaint from Bihar about the nomination by the Congress Legislature Party for Presidentship of the Legislative Council which has fallen vacant on account of the death of the President, Kumar Rajiva Ranjan Sinha. As the election is fixed for the 17th, I do not know if anything can be done now, and even if you decide to do anything, the election will have taken place before any decision might reach Ranchi. But it is not this particular question which has been causing me some anxiety. I receive complaints of various kinds from time to time from various provinces regarding the work of the ministries, and largely on account of my ill-health I feel I am not able to cope with the work. Under the constitution of the Congress, the Parliamentary Board consists of five or six members and the President of the Congress is its ex-officio Chairman. In that capacity I am there, but unfortunately I am not able to do the work to my own satisfaction, and perhaps others are also not satisfied. I would, therefore, request you to take up the work in my place and to deal with the questions as they arise. If you agree I shall ask all the papers relating to the Parliamentary Board work to be passed on to you.

As regards Bihar, I have kept aloof from local politics for which I am blamed by friends, but there are reasons for my doing so and it is no use discussing them in this letter. But it is not only as a member of the Bihar Congress Committee or as a prominent Congressman of Bihar that I have kept aloof, but I have not been taking interest in Bihar affairs even as President of the Congress

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and Chairman of the Parliamentary Board. You may, therefore, have to look into Bihar affairs also. I have been hesitating to put this extra burden on you as I know you too have a heavy burden, and it is, therefore, that I am writing to you to know if I could pass this work on to you. When my health improves, I shall be there to share the burden so long as I continue to be the President. I am asking Shankarrao Deo to see you in this connection to whom I am also sending a copy of this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

348

19 September 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 16 September 1948. I am very sorry that you have not kept well even at Pilani, but I do hope that you will start making rapid progress very soon and will be restored to normal health.

I am certainly most willing to relieve you of your burden regarding Parliamentary Board affairs during your illness. You know my health is also not quite normal, and I have heavy responsibilities of Government, but even then I shall try my best to deal with the whole work adequately. You can ask all the papers relating to the Parliamentary Board to be sent to me.

I should like to say, however, that our difficulties in regard to the Parliamentary Board matters have been very much enhanced on account of the composition of the Board. Our original procedure was quite satisfactory and helped us to deal with the matters expeditiously and effectively. The constitution of the Board now is such that we get involved into long arguments and personal animosities with the result that progress becomes bogged. I feel that we should do something about it. In any case, it is a definite and great handicap to have to work with persons who have their finger in local politics and who are always approaching matters from a subjective instead of an objective point of view.

I shall also deal with Bihar matters and you need have no worry on that score. Please try to get well as soon as you can.

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Shankarrao Deo came and spoke to me about the Presidentship of the Congress next year. He asked me to request you to stand for Presidentship once again. I told him that your health was the only reason which stood in the way of your standing again, but if you can persuade yourself to take up this burden, I am sure everybody in the country would welcome it and we shall also feel happy and relieved. At present there are four candidates, three of whom are members of the Working Committee and Tandonji is an outsider. If you stand there would be no contest and I do hope it will be possible for you to do so. But in case you still feel that you are not up to it, I feel we should settle this problem informally so that, if possible, a contest may be avoided. The time is short and I shall be glad if you can kindly let me know by telegram your own views. The matter is one which requires deep, earnest and urgent consideration, and I would request you to consider once again whether you can persuade yourself to stand for the Presidentship.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President
Indian National Congress
Pilani

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Camp Pilani
Jaipur State
22 September 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just received your letter dated 19 September 1948 and have wired to you that I am writing. I do not know why it should take four days for a letter written on the 19th to reach here on the 22nd. But it does. I do not know when this letter will reach you.

I am writing to the AICC to refer all Parliamentary Board matters to you. I know the difficulties which are enhanced to some extent by the constitution, but you have to do the best you can in the circumstances. I am thankful for your relieving me of this burden. I hope your health will stand the strain. For the last three or four days there has been considerable improvement

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in my health. I hope now the progress will be maintained and I shall be able to gain strength soon.

As regards the Presidentship of the Congress, I told you my own feelings in the matter. I have felt that I have not been able to do justice to the work entrusted to me, very largely on account of my ill-health which has somehow or other persisted ever since I took over charge. I do not know how it will behave hereafter, and it was for this reason that I felt that I should not take this burden on me again. I have also a feeling that we should let other people now come and take responsibility. People may not express it and many may not even feel it, but there is no doubt that in the minds of some at least there is a feeling that other people do not get a chance, and governmental as well as Congress authority remained concentrated in a few hands. I thought it will be wise not to disregard or minimise the effect of this sentiment. Considering all these things, I have been looking forward to a period of rest after the work of the Constituent Assembly is finished. I had a talk with Shankarraoji and also with Dr. Pattabhi and told them that my decision was not to stand for the Presidentship. Dr. Pattabhi has also written to me a letter basing upon that conversation and asking for my support to his candidature. Shankarraoji, of course, insisted even then that I should stand. I feel that the Congress organisation requires careful and constant handling. I can see conflicts not only amongst Congressmen divided into groups in a province but in the Congress committees on the one hand and the Congress Governments on the other. In some cases, the conflict is solved either by the Congress Committee getting the upper hand and Government changing or as more often happens by the ministry being able to influence the composition of the Congress Executives and practically running the Congress organisation also. I do not think, either position is satisfactory. It is a matter for consideration which we have not been able to give to the subject what the relation between the Congress organisation and the Government should be. We are sometimes apt to think that the Congress will remain in power in the provinces always, and an effort is made to arrogate powers to provincial committees or vice versa. There is a real risk for the future if the Congress organisation gets identified with the Government or rather the Government gets identified with the Congress organisation. If it can happen in the case of the Congress, it can also happen in the case of any other party which may for the time being manage to get into majority, and then that party will take the place of the Congress and the Government and

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the party will become identified. We have, therefore, to draw a line somewhere about the functions and the responsibility and rights of the Congress on the one hand and the responsibility which the Ministry owes to the Congress as apart from its responsibility to the legislature. This line is not clear and many difficulties arise. Whoever has to become the Congress President has, therefore, in the coming year to so run the organisation as to make it not only a capable organisation which will run the elections on adult franchise under the new Constitution but also take steps to remove the many grievances and complaints of which we hear so much. All this will require vigilance, hard work and integrity. It will also require clear conception of the present and future of the Congress. Because I have felt that my health may not be able to stand the strain, I have expressed my unwillingness. I know it will be difficult to make a choice, but that difficulty has to be faced somehow.

Kindly consult Jawaharlalji in the matter. If you both still think that I should take the burden, I cannot say 'no' and so long as my body can work, it will be at your service. But personally speaking I very much wish to have relief.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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27 September 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 22 September 1948.

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from Jawaharlal. You will see that he would also like you to stand and would be glad if you could continue as Congress President, provided you think that your health will be able to stand the strain, and that you should undertake this heavy burden at this critical juncture. My own view is that it would be demonstrably in the interests of the country as a whole if you could persuade yourself to continue as Congress President. Frankly speaking, I cannot think of any other suitable alternative. Do please let me know by telegram what you finally decide.

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I got a letter from the Premier of Madras sending me a copy of the resolutions passed by the Tamil Nad Congress Committee. The resolutions amount to interference in the day-to-day administration of the Government, but in view of the delicacy of relations between him and the Ministers I have sent for him for a personal discussion in Delhi.

I hope your health is now better and that Pilani is doing you good. With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Pilani

PS.

You referred in your first letter to Bihar affairs. Shankarrao promised to bring all the papers to me, but he has been mostly on the move, nor has he left with me any complaint or any evidence which he said he had. He has now gone to Maharashtra, and I do not know when he will come back. As soon as I get all the papers, I shall look into this matter.

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25 September 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of the letter which I have received from Rajen Babu (See No. 349) regarding the Presidentship of the Congress during next year. I should be grateful for your advice, particularly whether we should press him, in view of his reluctance to stand for election. If you feel that, having regard to the difficult problems with which the Congress organisation is faced, there is no suitable alternative to Rajen Babu, we may press him to stand. The matter requires urgent attention and very early decision, because the time is drawing near and Rajen Babu himself is awaiting a reply.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
25 September 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 25 September about the Congress Presidentship. I have read Rajendra Babu's letter. Only two days ago after my talk with you, when you told me that Rajendra Babu had finally refused to stand for the Congress Presidentship, I wrote to Pattabhi. I told him that I had no objection to his standing and if he got elected, I would welcome it. But I did not wish to take any sides in this matter or to make any public statement. All the candidates whose names had appeared were colleagues of ours, and it was not proper for me to make any special recommendation. This was all right for Bapu. But lesser fry had better remain silent, as I intended to remain.

Now Rajendra Babu's letter puts a somewhat different complexion on this business, as he hints that he would be prepared to undertake the burden of the Presidentship if you and I advised him to do so, although he wishes very much to be relieved of it.

I entirely agree with what Rajendra Babu has said about the fresh problems that are arising as between the Congress and the various Governments, more especially provincial Governments. Also that the Congress organisation requires careful handling. Indeed, it requires something much more than handling. It requires a fresh dose of vitality. I am afraid there is little doubt that while on the one hand, the Congress is quite dominant today in India, at the same time it is losing its hold and becoming just a political machine.

I find myself in a difficulty. If I felt that Rajendra Babu was going to keep moderate good health and would be able to give his time to the Congress sufficiently, and further that he was not averse to this, I would have no hesitation whatever in pressing him to stand. But from his letter to you I find that he is very reluctant, and we have seen that ill-health has pursued him for a considerable time. So I am torn between two urges: (1) to press him to stand for the Presidentship, for I would like him to be there, and (2) not to make him do anything which he is not keen on doing and which might be a special burden on him

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because of his ill-health. In the balance I would say that if he himself thinks that his health will be able to stand the strain and he feels that he should undertake this heavy burden at this critical juncture, I should like him to stand and would be very glad of his continuance as Congress President.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
29 September 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a letter from Rafi Ahmed and a copy of my reply to him. I do not know what you would suggest we should do in the circumstances. If you have any suggestion, please let me know.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE I

29 September 1948

Dear Jawaharlalji,

I am leaving in an hour's time. I have written to Khurshedlal to join and have explained both to him and to the Secretary about the work.

2. I would like you and Sardar Sahib to issue a joint statement before you leave for England about Congress President's election. People are taking advantage of the silence and will take advantage of your absence.

3. Mohanlal Gautam has told people that Sardar Sahib has promised Tandonji his support and has undertaken to get your and Rajen Babu's support. Acharya Jugal Kishore has gone a step further. He has told people that Sardar Sahib has asked Tandonji to seek election to strengthen his (Sardar Sahib's) hands against you on the communal issue. He has further stated that after your departure Sardar Sahib will issue a statement supporting Tandonji and will ask the provincial Ministers to support Tandonji.

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4. There can't be any truth in this, but that is how interested people talk. It is being given out that election is between you and Sardar Sahib, one supporting Tandonji and the other Dr. Pattabhi.

5. I would have seen Sardar Sahib about it, but I will not get an opportunity. If you consider it worthwhile, a joint statement may be issued about your position of neutrality.

Yours,
Rafi

ENCLOSURE II

New Delhi
29 September 1948

My dear Rafi,

Your letter of the 29th has just come.

I do not quite know what kind of a statement we can issue. Of course the rumours you mention are quite absurd. In this matter I have consulted Sardar Patel several times, and we came to the conclusion that neither of us should give any public or private support to any of the candidates for the Congress Presidentship and leave the elections entirely to the electors.

Dr. Pattabhi wrote to me about this matter asking for my support. I wrote to him that while I would welcome his election if he got elected, I did not propose to say anything on the subject as all the candidates were old colleagues of ours and it was difficult for me to say anything. It was all right for Mahatma Gandhi to give a lead in such matters but we are too small people to do that kind of thing.

I am sorry if this back chat is going on and various motives attributed to Sardar Patel or me. All that can be done is to deny privately because if we say anything in public that itself gives rise to an argument.

I shall, however, consult Sardar Patel in this matter.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai

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New Delhi
29 September 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 29 September 1948 with which you enclosed a letter from Rafi.

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2. I have already sent to Rajen Babu a copy of your letter regarding Presidentship of the Congress and have also written to him that, in my opinion, if his health permits and he is willing to undertake the burden, the best way out of the present difficulty would be for him to continue as President. If, as I expect, he accepts my suggestion, no further action would be necessary on the lines suggested by Rafi.
3. I am glad you have told Rafi in no uncertain terms discounting the rumours to which he refers and that you and I are agreed as to our course of action. It is incomprehensive to me how even men like Rafi can give any importance to such rumours. Before writing to you he could very well have telephoned to me and found out the truth. Nor can I understand how Rafi should even refer to any rumour regarding my making a statement during your absence. If I had any statement to make, I would have made it while you are here and after consulting you.
4. I am sending back Rafi's letter to you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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Camp Pilani
1 October 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

After several unsuccessful attempts, I could get you on the phone only this morning and I promised to write to you about the presidential election. I think I made a mistake in throwing the burden on you and Jawaharlalji to say if I should stand as a candidate in spite of my ill-health. Jawaharlalji is, I think, quite right in leaving it to me to decide whether my ill-health will permit me or not. He will of course like that I should continue but does not like to throw on me the burden if my health does not permit it. As I told you and wrote to you on the very first occasion, I am feeling very uncertain about my health. It has been a source of continuous trouble to me for the past several months, and I have not been able to do justice to the work which was entrusted to me either as President of the Congress or as Chairman of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. I feel this very strongly and do not

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like therefore to take the responsibility once again which I may not be able to discharge. I would, therefore, beg of you to excuse me.

But as I wrote to you, there is another consideration also. I said that I have a feeling that there were people who would like that opportunity should be given to others to take this responsibility. That has now become clear. I have received a telegram from Madras in which an appeal has been made to me to support Dr. Pattabhi's candidature, whose candidature is supported by the presidents of the provincial Congress committees of the seven South Indian provinces, namely, Andhra, Tamil, Kerala, Karnatak, Cochin, Mysore and Travancore, the last three being States which have now the status of Congress provinces. I think that I shall be forcing myself on these provinces if out of regard for me they were to withdraw their support from Dr. Pattabhi and transfer it to me if I remain a candidate, and I do not like that kind of election if it becomes unanimous in this way. Besides, I have a feeling that it might become a controversy between the North and the South which should be avoided. I have high regard for Tandonji but I would request him also to let Andhra have a chance this year, as, so far as I recollect, no Andhra has ever become a President of the Congress during its long history of 63 years. Its contribution to the Congress cause has been considerable and if there is a feeling in that province that an Andhra should be elected President, it is quite intelligible. South as a whole has contributed very considerably to the Congress success but so far as Presidentship of the Congress is concerned, there have been, so far as I remember, only four presidents so far, three of them being Tamilians, namely, Shri Anand Charlu, Shri Vijayaraghvacharya and Shri Srinivasa Iyengar and one Shri Shankaran Nair from Kerala. There has been only one president from the South, namely, Shri Srinivasa Iyengar during the last 27 years after Nagpur, which may be regarded as a period in which we have been associated. I would, therefore, have much liked that Shri Pattabhi should be brought in. I have great respect for Tandonji but I fear that if he remains in the field, it will become a dispute between the North and the South, which will be very harmful in the present condition of the country. I am therefore anxious to avoid this contingency and am prepared to make a personal request to Tandonji and the other two friends whose names have so far come out, to let Dr. Pattabhi come uncontested. I do not wish to take any part in the canvassing for one candidate or another apart from writing private letters to the

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candidates themselves, with what effect, I do not know. It is very difficult for me to disregard anything that you say and it is not without much hesitation and cogitation that on this occasion I feel compelled to ask you to excuse me. I hope you will not mind this.

I may tell you also that I do not anticipate any kind of difficulty from Dr. Pattabhi. I feel assured that he will be very considerate and reasonable and I say this on the strength of what he himself has written to me. I have no doubt in my mind that he will give none of us cause to regret his election.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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2 October 1948

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 1 October which I received this morning.

Apart from considerations of merit and the requirements of the Congress at this critical juncture, my purpose in asking you to stand was to save ourselves from the embarrassment in which we are bound to find ourselves in the face of competing claims from our colleagues. I cannot press you further. If your decision stands, then I am afraid we shall have to face the music.

But I feel that once you have decided to stand out, the best policy is not to take any part, direct or indirect, in favour of any candidate. They are all colleagues of ours. They must be all preparing their own ground for a contest. To ask any one of them to withdraw is likely to be misconstrued as preference for this or that man. I am sure you will appreciate that, when all of them are our colleagues, this sort of impression of discrimination would not be good.

Nor do I think that for such a great position of honour as that of the President of the Indian National Congress we should import any provincial or regional considerations. It should be left to the electorate to decide who among the competing candidates should have that distinction. It would be short-sighted either to assume

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or to encourage the idea that it would resolve itself into a struggle between the North and the South. As far as I know, we have never approached this most momentous problem from the point of provincial or regional considerations, and I do not see why we should anticipate that it would necessarily result in such approach or it would lead to a conflict between North and South.

You are probably not aware that another candidate has entered the list, i.e. Kripalani. I understand that he has written to Jawaharlal apologising for his conduct in criticising Government and taking an anti-Government stand before the AICC. I cannot vouchsafe for it, but that is what I have heard. I also hear that he has stood at the suggestion of Kidwai who has been working behind the scenes.

Lastly, even though you may be writing private letters to the various contestants, it is inevitable that these private letters would be made public and would be exploited. A position would be created when ultimately you would have to speak in public to explain your stand. I would advise you to do nothing which would compel you to take that step.

In all these circumstances, my sincere advice to you would be to keep entirely aloof, if once you decide that you should not yourself stand. That is, in my opinion, the best and the wisest policy, but of course it is for you to decide ultimately what you should do.

I hope your health is now better. That should be your primary consideration.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Pilani

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New Delhi
30 August 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Some days ago I received a personal and confidential letter from Lord Mountbatten. I showed it to the Governor-General [C. Rajagopalachari] today. He was of opinion that as this letter dealt with important and grave matters all the Members of the

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Cabinet should see it. I am therefore sending a copy of it to you. Please treat it as secret.

Jawaharlal

ENCLOSURE

LETTER FROM LORD MOUNTBATTEN TO PANDIT NEHRU, DATED LONDON, 15 AUGUST 1948

We have just come back from a great meeting at the Albert Hall where over 4,000 people joined together to celebrate the first anniversary of India's Independence. No doubt you will see the full report in the Press, but I thought you would like to know that every time your name was mentioned, it brought all proceedings to a standstill, so long and so genuine was the applause.

Edwina and I are off tomorrow morning to Ireland and after that to Canada, and will not be back until the end of the month, and I know that you will have in the meanwhile to take some very vital decisions. How I wish I could still be with you in Delhi and help you to make them by giving you a chance to discuss all the points with me as you used to in the old days.

Although I have no right whatever to make any comments, let alone give you any advice now, I feel in a way a continuing responsibility for the situation you are now faced with, for it was I who encouraged you to take the Kashmir case to UNO.

Since I have been over here, I have had an opportunity of discussing this problem with every sort of person and all shades of opinion. I have been struck by the unanimity of thought over here that India was absolutely right to go to UNO. I know that you (and I) have been criticised in India for having gone to UNO, because UNO handled the matter in a way that caused disappointment in India. But in the comparatively detached atmosphere of London it is more than ever clear that the alternatives before India were and still are open war or a decision by UNO. There are really no other alternatives except perhaps a continuation of undeclared war, with all the risks that entails of eventually turning into a declared war.

I think you will agree with [me that] Pakistan is in no position even to declare war, since I happen to know that their military commanders have put it to them in writing that a declaration of war with India can only end in the inevitable and ultimate defeat of Pakistan.

Therefore, a declared war can only come about by India making the declaration.

I know that you will instinctively shrink from taking such a course, but I also know that there are some of your colleagues in the Cabinet and the more

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noisy and unthinking elements in the country who will press you to declare war. I, therefore, feel it may be of some use if I enumerate again the disastrous consequences of such an act on the part of India.

After all that the leaders of free India have said and stand for, after having won your long battle against imperial rule, can we honestly contemplate that India's first major international act should be a declaration of war, and the final and open abandonment of all other methods of settling an international dispute? This will inevitably be of the gravest possible prejudice to India's future international position; indeed UNO might well outlaw her, in my opinion, naming her as the aggressor. What a paradoxical tragedy that would be!

I am certain I do not need to reassure you as to the sincere friendship which HMG feel towards India. The decisive voices in the British Cabinet are extremely sympathetic and well disposed towards India. If there was any doubt, surely Attlee's[1] remarks in the recent debate in the House on Hyderabad and Stafford's remarks at the Albert Hall today would reassure you. But whatever their feelings would be, they would have no option, in my opinion, but to conform [to] UNO's decision if they were to name India as the aggressor.

The converse seems equally true to me; if the United Kingdom were named an aggressor by UNO, the Government of India would be bound to conform to UNO unless indeed they were to abandon UNO.

I need not remind you that you have four crores of Muslims spread all over India to whom communal peace was given by Gandhiji's teaching and finally by his death. Can anyone doubt that all Gandhiji's teaching would be thrown by the board and that communal massacres which would make the Punjab look mild by comparison would follow open warfare with a Muslim State? A declaration of war would be signing the death warrant of a great number of innocent women and children within India and not merely within the war zone. In this respect I submit that India is in an almost unique position.

This would be a most inglorious end to the whole conception of the secular State for which you and Gandhiji and your followers have devoted your whole life's work.

Have you asked your Chiefs of Staffs Committee to give you the advantages and disadvantages of declaring war? If you had a thousand heavy bombers, or a hundred, or even fifty, which could completely flatten out the Pakistan bases, then I could understand the military temptation to declare war. But what have you got? A few old Dakotas with a somewhat doubtful

[1] Clement Richard Attlee: Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in Churchill Cabinet in Second World War; Prime Minister of Britain, 1945-51

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Harry Tate contraption to drop bombs which I have seen for myself at the Hindustan Aircraft Factory [Bangalore]. To hit the target with this arrangement would entail flying at so low a height that the Pakistan anti-aircraft gunners could not miss. And we know from our own experience in England how ineffective even a first-class bombing force can be until after years of training and war experience.

If, therefore, you will agree that no sane man could subscribe to a declaration of war, what is the alternative? Apart from going on with an undeclared war, which is so likely to lead to ultimate disaster, the alternative must be UNO.

I think that India should show some patience with UNO, for after all it is the first time humanity has got together to try and find an alternative to war. All my discussions here have convinced me that it was not malice, power politics, or any sinister motive which brought about the unsatisfactory treatment of our case. I admit that they took a long while to send the delegation; that they failed to deal with India's complaint against Pakistan as you would have wished them to, and that things have dragged on interminably; but now you have a delegation with you, and now is your opportunity to bring all possible legitimate pressure to bear to make them understand your position. I know that you, unfortunately, did not share my view that the last resolution of UNO was not unfavourable for India, but if you will look at it again I think you will find that if UNO were to implement it, it can provide a reasonable solution for India. Certainly, an infinitely better solution than plunging all the rest of India into the consequences of war.

If UNO, as Krishna [Menon] seems to think likely, order a ceasefire, with all the forces in their present positions, you might feel that this was giving an unfair advantage to Pakistan. But is it? If there are enough competent and honest observers, they can prevent the forward movement of troops and ammunition, and they can prevent any form of consolidation by Pakistan, or at least report any infringement which would finally put Pakistan out of court before UNO and the world.

The only satisfactory conclusion that I can see would be for UNO to condemn Pakistan publicly for sending their army into Kashmir on the grounds that this is Indian territory. I do not myself see how such a condemnation could precede the acceptance of the order to ceasefire. As I said just now, the act of complying with the ceasefire order could in no way prejudice India's military position as your military advisers will tell you, but the condemnation of Pakistan by UNO which can then follow would be the justification of the policy which you have pursued from January and the beginning of peace in Kashmir. In effect, this would enormously strengthen your position with your followers, and public opinion would certainly establish India's rightful position in the world.

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For God's sake don't get yourself plunged in "war" however great the internal pressure, for once in you cannot get out of the consequences.

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Avenida Presidente Vargas 509
Rio De Janeiro
30 August 1948

Dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

I am delighted to see from the papers that you are now restored to much better health and that you have taken your seat again in the Constituent Assembly. I must confess I feel a little homesick on reading its proceedings.

I thought I would delay replying to your kind letter of 11 May, written from Mussoorie, until I had something to say on the subject of Indian immigration here, to which you referred in your letter. As it is, there is hardly anything to report even yet. For one thing, while Brazil's need for immigrants is obvious to all intelligent people here and there is no colour bar as such, there is a widespread desire to keep Brazil predominantly European in its culture and way of life. For another, there happens to be a piece of legislation enacted in 1945 which restricts immigration every year from now to 2 per cent of what each country sent into Brazil between the years 1884 and 1933. This, though not aimed at us, certainly knocks us out of the ring, and I am now examining the possibilities of finding an "escape clause." To get the law amended would, as you can imagine, be a difficult undertaking with all the repercussions it might cause. I am afraid no one in New Delhi was aware of, or had taken the trouble to find out about, this restrictive legislation, and it came as a bit of a shock to me when I first learnt of it. We did not take up the matter immediately on our arrival as it might have given a wrong impression that this was what we were here for and the Ministry of External Affairs shared this view, but I hope to explore all possibilities, and I shall certainly report to Government, as well as to yourself personally in view of your interest in the matter, whatever progress may be made. I would like, however, to agree heartily with what you say in regard to the attitude of Indians who go overseas, and the need for their identification with the country they adopt. As it happens, there is only a handful of Indians already settled here and you will be glad to know that they at least do not suffer from the attitude to which you refer and are proving good citizens of Brazil.

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I do not know if you have received any reports about our progress. I am happy to say we have made an extremely good start. Things move rather slowly and leisurely here and the efficiency and speed with which we set up our Legation and got things going made, I think, somewhat of an impression. Our social contacts too have been extremely pleasant, both with the Brazilians and members of the Diplomatic Corps, and our Reception on August 15 was an unprecedented success. I gather it was the way we had furnished our residence with a few things we had brought from India which gave an oriental setting, as well as other distinctive touches, such as receiving the guests with attar and serving Indian food. We have received a very warm welcome indeed and our stock is high and the re-naming of a central square after Gandhiji is, I am confident, only the first of the concrete gestures of friendliness that we may in the course of time expect.

I notice from the papers that the session of the Constituent Assembly for adopting the draft of the Constitution has been postponed till after the Dominion Premiers' Conference in London. There is a lot of interest here in India's future position vis-a-vis the Commonwealth. Diplomats of many nationalities have asked rather anxiously about this and their general feeling seems to be that India will not only be doing a good turn to herself but also to the world at large and its peace and security if she decides to maintain her membership of the Commonwealth. Perhaps the rather sad example of Burma, which chose the other alternative, is in people's minds these days, although, of course, no one here has referred to it.

You and your colleagues must be preoccupied now with the grave problems presented by Kashmir and Hyderabad. Over here people, of course, are more concerned with the threat of a wider conflict which hangs ominously over the world. Brazilian public opinion, as well as the Diplomatic Corps as a whole, is greatly exercised over the totalitarian threat and there is undivided sympathy for the democratic side.

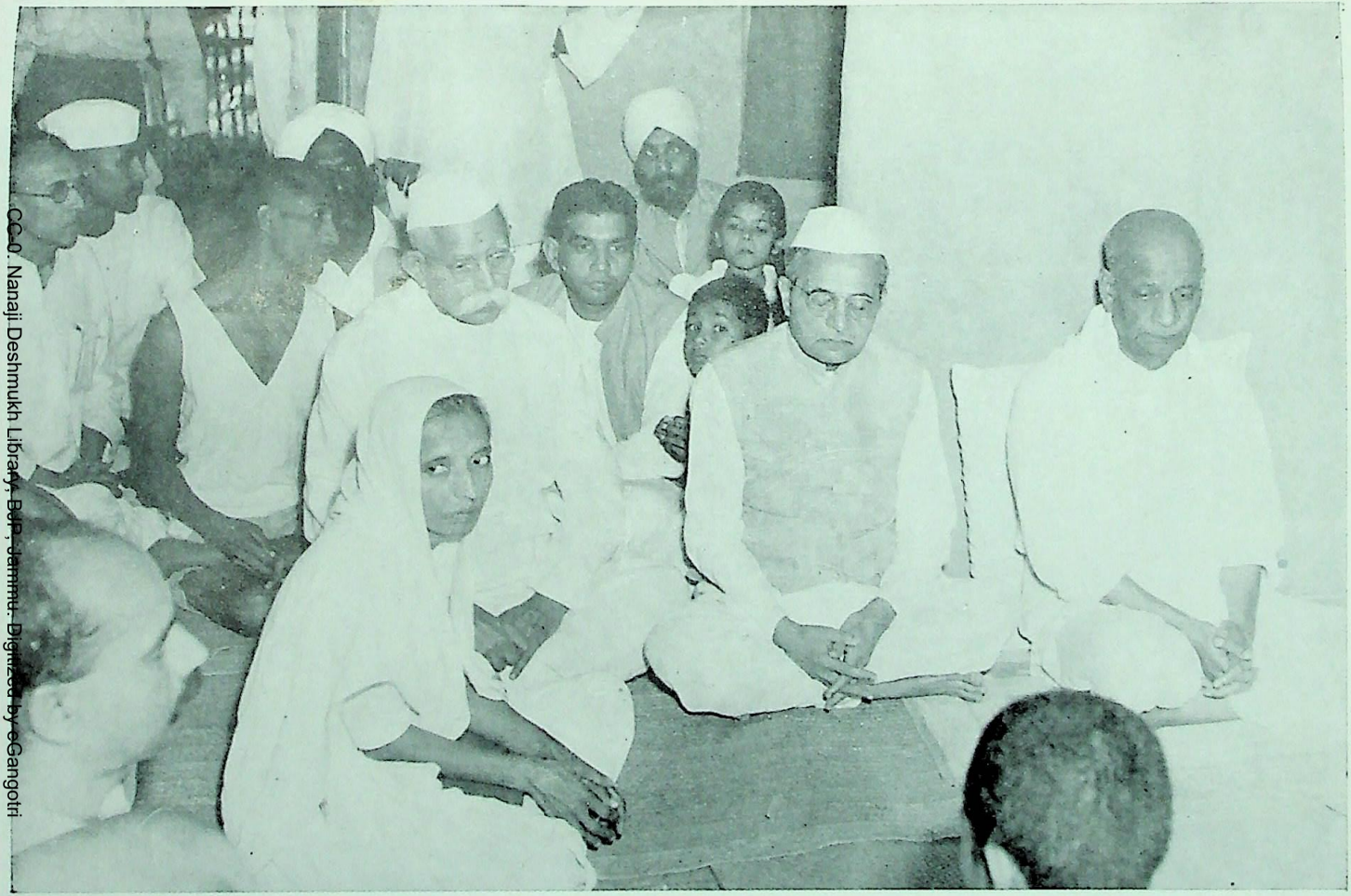
I do hope you are not working too hard and that your health is standing up well to the strain?

With best wishes and regards,

Yours sincerely,
Minoo Masani

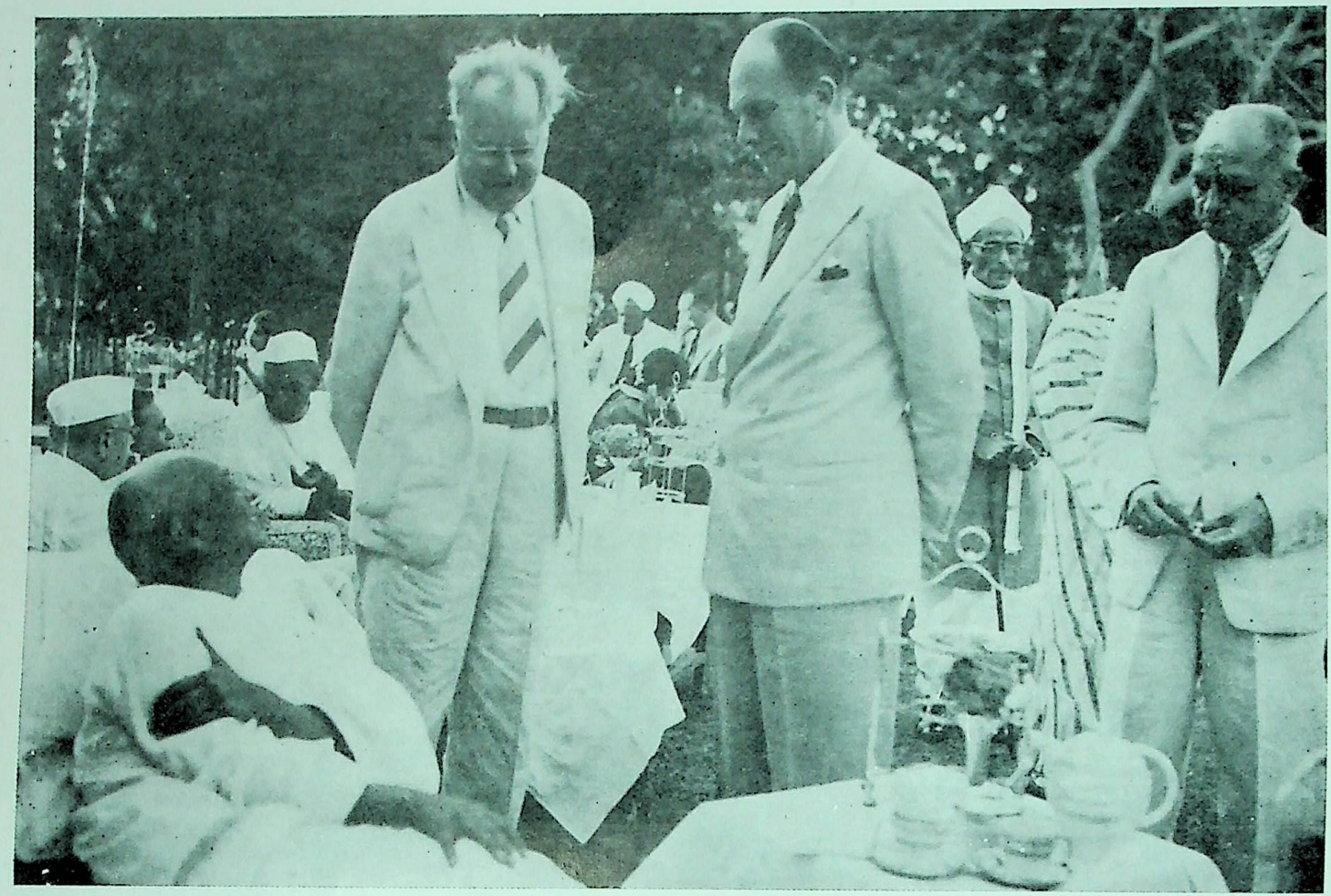
The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Government of India
New Delhi

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PATEL WITH MANGALDAS PAKVASA, GOVERNOR OF CENTRAL PROVINCES, RAVISHANKAR SHUKLA, PREMIER, AND MANIBEN PATEL SEATED ON HIS RIGHT AT MAHATMA GANDHI'S ASHRAM AT SEVAGRAM ON 3 NOVEMBER 1948



THE SARDAR HOSTING A RECEPTION TO CENTRAL INDIA PRINCES ON 20 APRIL 1948, IS SEEN TALKING TO US AMBASSADOR HENRY GRADY, WHILE NETHERLANDS AMBASSADOR LAMPING AND CHIEF JUSTICE KANIA LISTEN TO THE CONVERSATION

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1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi
9 November 1948

My dear Minoo Masani,

Thank you for your letter of 30 August 1948. I am sorry that, due to my preoccupations, I have not been able to acknowledge it earlier.

I am sorry to find that there are legal difficulties in the way of Indians going to Brazil and settling down there, but I do hope that you will be able to find some way to circumvent those difficulties.

I am glad to know that you have now settled down so well. The renaming of a Central Square after Gandhiji in itself shows that your efforts to create a better understanding of India are meeting with a satisfactory response. I hope you are no longer troubled on account of any adverse reactions about Hyderabad. The problem really no longer exists now, and I am glad that a potential danger to the peace of India has now been removed.

The Constituent Assembly has started its session, and we are today finishing the general discussion on the Draft Constitution. We hope to finalise our Constitution by the end of December. Sir Homi Modi has taken your place.

I am now very much better. I have just returned from a strenuous tour of Bombay and Nagpur. I am, however, trying to avoid as much strain as possible, but then, as you will realise, there is a limit to which one can do so.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Mr. Minoo Masani
The Legation of India
Chancery
Avenida Presidente Vargas, 509
Rio De Janeiro (Brazil)

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17 October 1949

My dear Sir Gopalaswami,

I wonder if I may request your personal intervention as Acting Minister of External Affairs in a matter which I fear threatens to develop in a manner which will not redound to the credit of the Ministry of External Affairs or the prestige of our Foreign Service.

2. I would never have troubled you in this matter if it had not been for the item appearing on the front page of the National Herald (Lucknow) of the 13th instant, of which I am enclosing a copy for your perusal. This savours of a deliberate leakage on the part of some elements in the Ministry of External Affairs. It is not the first time that such an attempt has been made. I drew the attention of the Prime Minister and the Secretary-General to the action of Atal[1] in trying to secure distribution of a tendentious statement through the office of P.T.I. Reuters in New Delhi and referred them to Sir Ushanath Sen[2] for confirmation. Other attempts have been made from the same quarters to encourage certain newspapers in Bombay to publish such reports.

3. I am attaching for your kind perusal a copy of my correspondence with Sir Girjashankar Bajpai and with Mr. K. P. S. Menon,[3] which will give you the background. There is very little I can add to it beyond saying that, looking back on it, it is now clear to me that before I reached Delhi on 12 September the Ministry had already prejudged matters and that the subsequent motions of going through an investigation have been designed to do nothing more than to arrive at findings already reached in advance. It is obvious, therefore, that if any investigation is to be made which can command confidence, it would have to be on the part of the some one who brings a fresh mind to bear on the matter and is not in any way committed to a particular point of view. I would therefore like to repeat to you personally the offer of co-operation, which I made to the Ministry but which has

[1] J. K. Atal: ICS; First Secretary, Indian Embassy in Brazil

[2] Manager, Press Trust of India

[3] ICS; Agent-General of Government of India in China, 1943-47; Ambassador to China, 1947; Ambassador to Russia, Poland and Hungary, 1952-61

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unfortunately been disregarded by them, in elucidating the truth in regard to the matters in dispute. I do hope you will find it possible to respond to this request which represents one more effort I am making to get the matter dealt with in a way that would conserve the prestige of our Administration and at the same time do justice to all concerned.

4. I shall be grateful for an early reply.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
Acting Minister of External Affairs
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

MINOO MASANI AND NURSE SALLY HALLER

From our Special Correspondent

New Delhi, 11 October—It is understood that the Government of India, who investigated into the complaint that Mrs. Sally Haller, of Bombay, who was formerly nurse to the child of Mr. Minoo Masani when the latter was serving as Indian Ambassador in Brazil, was subjected to harsh treatment, has come to the conclusion that Ambassador Masani's attitude towards the nurse was vindictive.

It may be recalled that Mr. Masani had made a complaint to the Brazilian police that Sally Haller was a dangerous person, and that she should be kept in a concentration camp for illegal immigrants until her deportation. But the police made inquiries and released her immediately. Subsequently, the Government of India made thorough investigations into the whole episode and reached the above conclusion, which is reported to have been communicated to Mr. Masani. Sally Haller, after her dismissal from service, took shelter with two officers serving in the Indian Embassy, namely, J. K. Atal, First Secretary, and Krishna Kripalani, Cultural Attache. Soon afterwards both Atal and Krishna Kripalani also were obliged to return to India before the completion of their terms for which they were originally sent. The reasons for which these two officers were sent away to India are under examination by the Government of India. Another issue engaging consideration of the Government of India is whether the Indian Ambassador had persuaded the Brazilian Government to declare Atal and Krishna Kripalani as "persona non grata." It is likely that the Government of India's conclusions will be officially announced shortly.

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New Delhi
24 October 1949

My dear Gopalaswami,

I am sending herewith a copy of the letter which I have received from Minoo Masani and of my reply thereto.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Bombay House
Fort Bombay
17 October 1949

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I am sorry, in view of the strain on your health, to have to trouble you again but, since I wrote to you on the 12th instant forwarding my correspondence with the Ministry of External Affairs, there has been a further development by way of an offensive report in the National Herald (Lucknow) of the 13th instant, of which I enclose a copy for your perusal. It is quite clear that, unless they are stopped, certain elements in the Ministry of External Affairs are determined to carry this matter to lengths which will create a situation where the existing despondency about our Foreign Service can only be increased. This, in turn, is sure to affect adversely, both abroad and at home, the prestige of our country, which is something that I am desperately keen should be avoided.

Now that you are Acting Prime Minister, may I not appeal to you to intervene in order to avert a situation that must inevitably be distasteful to all who want the prestige of our Government to be upheld? I am enclosing a copy of a letter I have just addressed to Sir N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Acting Minister of External Affairs, and I shall be grateful if you will kindly speak to him about this matter so that he may intervene immediately to stop things from drifting the way they have been.

May I please have an early line by way of guidance from you?

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With regards and best wishes for your good health,

Yours sincerely,
Minoo Masani

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Acting Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
25 October 1949

My dear Sardarji,

Thank you for your letter dated the 24th instant regarding the Minoo Masani episode.

I sent him a reply to his letter to me on 20 October, a copy of which is enclosed for your information.

The material that has been called for from Brazil has not yet arrived, and, I am afraid, it is not likely that any investigation that is made in the meanwhile can be completed before Jawaharlalji's return.

Yours sincerely,
N. Gopalaswami

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

LETTER DATED 20 OCTOBER 1949 FROM SHRI N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR TO SHRI M. R. MASANI, BOMBAY HOUSE, BOMBAY

The papers referred to in your letter of 17 October were received by me yesterday and I hasten to send you my first reaction after reading them.

2. You have referred to the news item appearing on the front page of the National Herald of the 13th instant and suggest that this savours of a deliberate leakage from the Ministry of External Affairs. I shall have this allegation of leakage looked into. I notice, however, that articles and news items on this unfortunate episode have appeared in other newspapers also. My attention has been drawn particularly to Mr. Karaka's article in the issue of The Current of 12 October, which seems to indicate that there must have been some leakage from quarters connected with this episode other than the Ministry of External Affairs. The last of the copies of letters you have sent

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me, the one dated 11 October from you to K. P. S. Menon, is a criticism of two letters addressed to you by the Secretary-General, External Affairs. It would hardly be right for me to go into the merits of your criticism until I have before me what the Secretary-General has himself to say on your letter. He is unfortunately, now away in America.

3. Reading the documents you have sent me, it strikes me that your insinuation is both premature and unjust, namely, that "it is now clear to me that before I reached Delhi on 12 September the Ministry had already prejudged matters and that the subsequent motions of going through an investigation have been designed to do nothing more than to arrive at findings already reached in advance." The Ministry's letter to you dated 22 September has clearly stated that without the fullest enquiry no conclusion would be reached on the issues involved. It added that the information at its disposal was inadequate. It further gave you the assurance that "everything will be done to expedite that investigation, but, considering that some enquiry is necessary in Rio itself and that relevant documentary material has to be obtained from there, it is impossible to work to a fixed date." The documentary material has been called for and I shall ascertain on Saturday, when the offices re-open, how much of it remains yet to be received. The question whether you should be communicated with, for obtaining such further information and assistance as you can give, will, no doubt, be decided after the receipt of the documentary material.

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CHAPTER XV

PATEL ON GLOBAL MATTERS

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New Delhi
15 October 1948

My dear Premier,

The Prime Minister wrote to you on 4 October 1948 on the eve of his departure for Europe. He left Delhi on the 5th afternoon and Bombay the same night. The importance of his visit to Europe at this juncture cannot be over-emphasised. Not only important matters of common concern to all the members of the British Commonwealth but also some special matters concerning the well-being and future of this country required an exchange of views with His Majesty's Government in the UK and other Dominions. Recently, our stand and the policy regarding Kashmir and Hyderabad have come in for review and criticism on the part of foreign statesmen and Press. Such review and criticism have, in the nature of things, been prejudiced and extremely one-sided. Reasons for this are obvious. The freedom of India has been the cherished desire of only a small number of Britishers. There is still considerable evidence of bitterness and chagrin at the loss of influence, prestige and power on the part of British civil servants and other vested interests. There is also an undercurrent of antipathy towards this country. Both India's prosperity and its success arouse these latent as well as patent animosities and quite often there is a chorus of ill-informed and biased criticism of our action. I hope the Prime Minister's visit to European countries would introduce a sense of proportion and understanding amongst these critics.

2. The affairs of the United Nations continue to give rise to apprehension. The forum of the UNO has become a platform for the exchange of abuses and bitter and hostile criticism between the two blocks in which the world is being sought to be divided (somewhat reminiscent of the old Papal Bull which divided the colonies of the world between Spain and Portugal in the Middle Ages). Whether it is the question of disarmament or the atom

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bomb or the Berlin issue, this cleavage manifests itself in its worst form. India has been trying to play the role of the Good Samaritan and trying to evolve order out of chaos and agreement out of differences. It has succeeded in resolving the deadlock over the revival of the Atomic Commission and Sir B. N. Rau, who has been elected Chairman of the sub-committee of eleven to examine the problem of international control of atomic energy, has been straining his best to bring the contending points of view of the Anglo-American bloc and the Soviet as near each other as possible. India has also been elected a member of the Economic and Social Council by an overwhelming majority.

3. The Security Council has been preoccupied with the Berlin dispute and the problem of Hyderabad has been left in cold storage. There is, however, evidence of a better appreciation of our case by members of the Security Council. The Foreign Minister of Argentina offered the leader of our delegation a handsome apology for the attacks made by the Argentine representative on the Security Council against India. It is likely that as a result of this incident the bitterness and animosity which the Argentine Delegation has hitherto shown towards India would diminish, if not disappear altogether. The indications are that despite Pakistan's attempts to keep interest alive in the issue of Hyderabad the Security Council would let it slide into oblivion. In any case, we have instructed our delegation to refuse to be drawn into a discussion on the merits of the issue, but to restrict itself to a contention that Hyderabad has no locus standi, and that actually the issue has been withdrawn and is no longer before the Security Council. Perhaps a clue to the latest move, which has been made by the Pakistan Foreign Minister to claim an interest in the Hyderabad question, is provided by the evidence which has come in our possession that a major portion of about Rs. 14 crores, which that State has spent on the mad venture of mobilising international opinion and clandestinely obtaining arms and ammunition, has gone to the high-ranking Pakistan officials including the Foreign and Finance Ministers of Pakistan and their Defence Secretary and Financial Adviser.

4. In East Asia, our main problem is still the developing Communist menace in Burma. Despite the heroic resistance and even offensive on the part of Government forces, the insurgents still command a hold over a number of provinces. The economic life of the country has been thrown completely out of gear. The administration is on the verge of a breakdown and conditions of

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transport and communications are chaotic. In Indonesia, the Republican Government is faced with hostilities on two fronts: the Communists and the Dutch. There are, however, signs that Government forces are gaining some ascendancy over the Communists. The Dutch, who seem to have tried to make some capital out of the difficulties of the Government, do not seem to be in any mood either to learn or unlearn. In Malaya, the Communist forces seem to have suffered a reverse, but the country is still not free from their menace. In China, the National Government has suffered a grievous blow in the loss of Tsinan, the Capital of Shanton province and the gateway to Central China. The critical situation in that country shows no signs of abatement. Indeed, the only bastions of security and law and order are India and Japan which General MacArthur seems to be converting into an anti-Communist fortress in the East.

5. The French Settlements in India have latterly been in the limelight. The Government of India and the Government of France agreed that the future of French Settlements should be decided by a referendum and that the procedure for such referendum should be settled by the Municipal Council of the five Settlements to be newly elected. Last month municipal elections were held in Chandernagore, which resulted in the party favouring union with India securing a large majority of seats. Elections in the other four Settlements were fixed for 10 October. In the meantime, certain complaints were received regarding the procedure prescribed for the elections and certain manoeuvres giving weightage to the opposite party. The Government of India, therefore, requested a postponement of the elections in order to give them time to go into these complaints. The Government of France agreed to postpone the elections till 24 October. But as this was insufficient we have asked for a further postponement. The results of these elections are of some importance to us as they would provide a basis for our negotiations with the Portuguese Government regarding Portuguese possessions in India.

6. Regarding Kashmir, the UN Commission is still writing its report. Recent indications are that the intensity of the conflict will increase in the coming weeks. We are also trying to build up our supplies for the winter months. Now that we are free from any large-scale commitments in Hyderabad, we can concentrate better on our Kashmir operations. It would, however, be futile to expect any very quick results. There are signs, however, that the Pakistan Government are feeling the drain on

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their resources which this running sore involves, and it is possible they may be more amenable to any proposals for settlement which the Commission might put forward, as is generally expected.

7. Many speculations are rife in the Press and on the platform in regard to our policy on Hyderabad. As I pointed out in a public statement some time ago, our first concern is to establish law and order and to create conditions in Hyderabad in which it would be possible to hold elections to the Constituent Assembly in peace and tranquillity. Our efforts to establish law and order are meeting with increasing success. The Razakars have been dealt with to a very large extent. The Communist menace in Nalgonda and Warangal districts is being systematically faced. The administration is being gradually brought to normalcy. Once reasonable normal conditions are restored, it will be possible to hold elections to the Constituent Assembly for which we are pushing ahead with the preparation of electoral rolls. You will doubtless realise that the pacification of such a large area and the administrative overhaul of the State are very big commitments, particularly in the present depleted conditions of available manpower. With the help and co-operation of the provinces of Bombay, CP, and Madras we have been able to secure a bare skeleton of staff, both civil and police, and with the help of that staff we have made small beginnings. I am afraid we shall have to make further calls on provincial resources, and I hope our request will meet with the same prompt response which was extended to us earlier.

8. There is, I am afraid, only a superficial change in our relations with Pakistan. You must have read the many friendly references to Pakistan made in the Prime Minister's speeches and broadcasts. The Pakistan Prime Minister's reply was typical of him and the new State. In asking for deeds rather than words, he was merely quoting scriptures, and he has tried to make out as if Pakistan was doing the best it could to maintain friendly relations, and it [was] we who were setting all these well-intended efforts at naught. The Pakistan Government also seem to have fallen a victim to the familiar Nazi disease of seeing enemies all round themselves. The hysterical search for fifth columnists which seems to have been started in the typical Hitlerian fashion has the appearance of another excuse to drive out the comparatively few non-Muslims that are left there. In this Government is being supported in season and out of season by a warmongering Press. False and virulent anti-Indian propaganda, full of hate and venom, is being put across, particularly by the Urdu

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Press against Indian leaders and Central and provincial Governments. The Home Ministry have issued a Press note which gives some glaring examples of such propaganda. The Pakistan Government have endeavoured to counter these allegations, but in a comparison of the two their case would hardly stand scrutiny, both from the point of view of importance of newspapers and their contents. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan has sent a couple of telegrams to the Prime Minister professing friendship and peaceful sentiments, but he has taken care to emphasize that the Kashmir issue must be settled to their satisfaction. It is obvious that we cannot purchase peace at the expense of Kashmir. But from the oft-repeated references to a settlement of the Kashmir issue which he makes, it seems quite clear that Kashmir is rankling in their breasts. In the meantime, annoyances of all kinds continue, typical of which are the restrictions imposed on East Punjab Liaison staff in Lahore and the frequent incidents they create in the Patharia forest reserves on the borders of Assam and East Bengal.

9. During the last fortnight we have announced some of the important anti-inflationary measures which we intend to enforce in order to meet the worsening economic situation. One of the most important of those is the drastic curtailment of Government expenditure. This would undoubtedly involve the merciless pruning of many favourite items on the part of Ministers, both Central and provincial; it would also mean the suspension or postponement of some important schemes of development. We are convinced, however, that there is no other alternative way of balancing our budgets which is so essential to create confidence and a sense of economic security. It is obvious, however, that the efforts of Government should be fully backed by public opinion and by business men, industrialists, investors and labour. In times of crisis, panic is the worst enemy. For some time past industry and investment have been particularly subject to influences of rumours and utterances of all kinds. In such an atmosphere, the need for balanced words and carefully thought out phrases on economic matters cannot be overstressed. What is essential is that from men in authority or in the know of Government's minds, there should not issue any inconsistent statement or a jarring note on the essentials of our economic policy and programme. We should all, Central and provincial Ministers alike, therefore, make a concerted attempt not to give the least cause for speculation or alarm, to cultivate the virtue of silence where we are not able to speak with authority on economic matters, and to say nothing which would be inconsistent with authorised pronouncements

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on the economic position and programme. I am sure you all realise that the economic position of the country is causing us the gravest concern. Any further accentuation only makes the position more perilous and whoever is the instrument of that accentuation, be he an official or non-official, an employer or a worker, an industrialist or an investor, does a positive disservice to his Government and the country.

10. The labour situation is undoubtedly causing us anxiety. Repeated counsel to labour to produce more seems to go unheeded by a no means insignificant section of the workers. The Bombay dock strike is the latest example of labour intransigence. We have already emphasised that increased production and prosperity and economic stability would be possible only if Government, the employers and the workers all co-operate in an intensive production drive. It is obvious that any one of this tripartite combination can render the other two either inoperative or partially ineffective. We must, therefore, deal drastically with any wanton defiance of the laws of social prudence and economic equilibrium and with unsocial elements which foster and promote such defiance.

11. In this task of dealing with the present economic situation we naturally depend on the maximum co-operation from the provincial Governments. We have already seen in the Press reports of instances of their determination to help us. It might be of some help to you to know that we have set up a Priorities Committee of the Cabinet which would scrutinise financial and development schemes and deal with other cognate questions in an effort to implement our policy at the Centre. A similar businesslike body in the provinces would, I have no doubt, be of great advantage to you in reviewing your budgetary position and schemes of development etc. Another sphere in which provincial Governments can be of great help to us is in ensuring that the machinery of economic controls functions smoothly, efficiently and honestly. Corruption and instances of want of integrity or laxity must be put down with a strong hand and evaders of control regulations must be dealt with severely.

12. In the sphere of law and order, the Communist menace demands constant vigilance. It is clear that we cannot allow a situation to develop which would create in India conditions even remotely suggestive of Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and China. It would never be allowed to deteriorate beyond a police problem and even there the less of a problem the better. A careful check of intelligence and co-ordination between all relevant sources of information

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is a sine qua non of success in dealing with a subversive movement of this kind. We have also to keep a ceaseless watch for leaders and active workers who have gone underground. And we have to beware of the Communist cells inside Government itself, the increasing evidence of which is causing us serious concern. We are proposing to set up a high-level committee of Secretariat officers which will constantly keep the problem under review, obtain decisions of Government on matters of policy and ensure that those decisions are promptly and effectively enforced. You might find a similar body useful in the provincial sphere.

13. You must have read in the papers about the meetings of the South-East Asia Regional Branch of the World Health Organisation and about the inauguration of the State Employment Insurance Scheme. Both these events are likely to mark an important stage in the advancement of social security and I have no doubt that their activities will increasingly claim popular attention and appeal.

14. In the sphere of States, an important landmark has been reached by the completion of the process of integration which was started last December and which, by the removal of the Hyderabad sore, has attained a measure of unity which India had never attained during the last so many centuries. By the process of mergers, the formation of unions, the accession of those unions in all subjects on the federal and concurrent lists, and by the elimination of all pretence to independence from the biggest of the States, the Indian polity is now in a position to be shaped according to a common pattern. The problems of consolidation and administrative reorganisation must now claim our attention. Without a satisfactory solution of these the gains which we have so far registered will become largely illusory. Apart from this, we have to beware against regionalism and provincialism of an undesirable type. To some extent local patriotism is both desirable and necessary, but we have to take care that we do not overstep the limits within which this virtue must be contained. Similarly, we should guard against harmful manifestations of class or communal consciousness. These are all disintegrating forces which if not controlled and checked are apt to destroy all the good work of integration and unification that has been achieved. I do hope you will see that that situation is never reached.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

To
All Premiers

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Nagpur
31 October 1948

My dear Premier,

In my last letter to you I mentioned about the Prime Minister's visit overseas. You have doubtless seen Press reports of the great impression which his personality has created in the UK and France and of the great welcome he has received wherever he has gone. In the tremendous rush of his engagements, the Prime Minister has been good enough to find some time to write to me and his letters reveal that he has remarkably succeeded in creatting a better understanding of our stand in various matters of international importance and in evoking considerable sympathy and support for our point of view. Many problems—constitutional, economic and defence—of inter-Dominion concern have also been discussed and the representatives of other Dominions realised that India had a contribution of its own to make, which, while differing in some ways from the traditional approach to which they were accustomed, was nonetheless noteworthy. They also appreciated the importance of the position which India held, particularly in the present-day conditions in South-East Asia, with China involved in internecine strife, Burma contending with tremendous disruptive forces ranged against it and Indonesia and Malaya threatened so seriously by the Communist menace. India has thus made its influence felt in the inter-Dominion talks that have recently concluded and the Prime Minister has, by his breadth of vision, his grasp of international affairs and his keen understanding won the ears and hearts of Dominion statesmen. He has left Paris for Cairo, where he will stay for three days. He will arrive in Bombay at 1 a.m. on 6 November and in Delhi at 11-30 a.m. the same day.

2. The affairs of the United Nations General Assembly have unfortunately shown no signs of improvement, and it has continued to be the centre of international interest and intrigues. The differences between the Western powers and the USSR have not so far been resolved. There was a faint gleam of hope when neutral powers intervened to resolve the deadlock, but unfortunately the situation has again settled down into an unrelieved gloom. The

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Western powers are not prepared to abandon their existing supremacy in atomic weapons, unless effective sanctions were forthcoming to enforce inspection and control. Soviet Russia continues to be distrustful and suspicious of Anglo-American intentions and policies, while the Western powers on their part continue to nurse their grievances against Russia both in respect of Berlin and the iron curtain that shuts out Eastern Europe from the rest of the world. There can be no doubt that the political differences between the two blocks of powers have reached a critical stage, but fortunately this development has not coincided with military preparedness on either side. It seems that both the UK and America on the one side and Soviet Russia on the other are unprepared for a showdown. It is this fact which has probably saved the world from another conflict, at any rate for the time being.

3. The Indian Delegation continued to play a prominent and, on the whole, a fairly successful part in the General Assembly. I have already referred in my previous letter to the efforts Sir B. N. Rau made to revive the Atomic Commission. In the Trusteeship Committee, the Indian resolution calling upon those Governments, which had not transmitted information under Article 73(a) of the Charter on certain territories for 1947 and 1948, to furnish the required information and to keep the UN informed of any change in the constitutional position of any territory, was carried by a comfortable majority. Our efforts to make permanent the Sub-committee on Information regarding non-self-governing territories succeeded only partially, as it was decided to keep the Committee alive only for another year, at the end of which we intend to press for its continuance.

4. Nearer home, the municipal elections, which are to be a prelude to a referendum on the future of the French Settlements in India, have been held in Pondicherry, Yanam and Karaikkal. These elections which, according to reliable reports, were by no means free from irregularities, have resulted in a large majority for the Socialist Party which is not in favour of a merger with India. Efforts are being made by this party, apparently backed by the French authorities, to do away with the referendum altogether and to secure an autonomous status for the French Settlements under the double guarantee of the Governments of India and of France. In Mahe, the elections could not take place owing to certain untoward occurrences on the eve of the elections. The original French allegation that these occurrences were provoked by the incursion into Mahe of "thousands of

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people on the Indian side" is wholly incorrect. In a subsequent statement, made by a French official, the number has dwindled from "thousands" to "a hundred Indian volunteers". Our own information is that the disturbance was purely local and spontaneous and was provoked by the openly partisan attitude adopted by the French officials in Mahe in regard to the elections. We have no intention of being deflected from our decision that the future of the French Settlements in India should be decided by means of a referendum, conducted under the joint observation of the Indian and French Governments.

5. From all accounts, it appears that Hyderabad has ceased to agitate the mind of the Security Council. It is possible, however, that the Security Council is keeping the matter on its dormant file merely to raise it, should any developments in Hyderabad justify re-opening the matter. For this purpose, it is likely that it is deliberately avoiding any clear pronouncement either on the status of Hyderabad or on the competence of the Hyderabad Government to raise this issue before the UNO, or even on the fact whether the complaint should now be deemed to be withdrawn. Our case, however, has been, and will always be, that Hyderabad has no locus standi in the counsels of the United Nations, and since the complaint has been withdrawn by the authority that made it, there is no case for the Government of India to answer.

6. As regards Kashmir, the fighting continues as briskly as before. There is little change of fronts on either side. Our forces have registered some small gains and have repelled attacks on their position, particularly in Tithwal. For the moment, we are engaged on a small front on a snowy range of some strategic importance. Initially we have scored some successes and we are hoping that the plan will go through. You must have seen the repeated emphasis which the Pakistan Prime Minister has been making on the problem of Kashmir as an essential item which must be cleared before concord and amity can be restored between India and Pakistan. The Prime Minister has already had three discussions with the Pakistan Prime Minister, two of them in the presence of Messrs. Attlee and Bevin and one a private discussion in Paris, but no progress towards a solution has been made. Both sides have reiterated their position, but have found it impossible to change it. There have been professions of goodwill and friendship on the side of the Pakistan Prime Minister, but no practical proof of any intention to translate them into practice has been forthcoming.

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7. Another problem in our relations with Pakistan is raising itself. This is the exodus from East Bengal to West Bengal, which has suddenly received a great momentum during the last fortnight. I have been told by the Premier of West Bengal that his province is unable to take any more refugees. Yet the economic and political conditions in East Bengal are such that even some Muslims are now trying to find refuge in better-off West Bengal. We are anxiously following the trend of this influx. It seems to us quite plain that India cannot take any more refugees from East Bengal without a territorial re-adjustment between East and West Bengal. The Prime Minister has taken up the question of this exodus with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, who has promised to visit East Bengal in an attempt to re-assure the minorities and remove their legitimate grievances. Let us see whether anything would come of this visit which is due to take place towards the latter half of November.

8. In Pakistan, fantastic false stories about Hyderabad on the so-called 'atrocities' of Indian troops continue to poison the atmosphere. The spy mania, to which I referred in my last letter, has also got Pakistan in its grip. Even our High Commissioner has been slandered as a spy in the Pakistan Press. Capital has been made of his letter which was found on the person of Mr. Parasram who was a personal assistant of the Sind Prime Minister. It would interest you to know that the Sind Premier has written personal letters about accommodating Mr. Parasram to the Premiers of UP and of Bombay. This merely demonstrates the fantastic absurdity of the charges regarding espionage charges being concocted in the Pakistan Press.

9. Another development has been the protest we have received from Pakistan against the attempts which the West Bengal Government has been making to reimpose their authority on the char lands which had become the subject of aggression by the East Bengal Government. We were in a weak position when, as a result of rivers becoming swollen during the monsoon, we could not reimpose our authority on the char lands on the other side of the rivers, whereas now when the waters are receding and we can reimpose our authority by force, the Pakistan Government has started squealing. We have made it quite clear to the Pakistan Government that we are not prepared to abdicate our authority on lands which belong to us, and we mean and are fully resolved to hold our own.

10. In May last year, we had arrived at a trade agreement with Pakistan, but its implementation had been retarded on account

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of various factors. We were of course vitally interested, particularly in the matter of raw jute and cotton. It was, therefore, agreed to discuss the whole position again, so that we might settle the means of reviving the observance of that agreement. Officials on both sides accordingly met in Karachi and came to a settlement on 20 October to ensure flow of commodities from either side. Unfortunately, under the agreement, we cannot secure from Pakistan the much-needed supplies of foodgrains, and it would be necessary for us to make up the deficiency by means of imports. That has somewhat detracted from the value to us of that agreement, but our interests in the import of raw jute and cotton have been sufficiently safeguarded and to that extent it would be possible for us to derive some benefit from the agreement. This would of course depend on how quickly Pakistan and Indian business concerns settle the transactions and how fast the commodities can be moved in either direction.

11. The economic situation has continued to give us concern and to command our attention. You have perhaps already familiarised yourself with the many anti-inflationary measures about which we have made announcements in the Press. In pursuance of the general policy to which I referred in my previous letter, we have now announced measures of relief from customs duties on industrial raw materials, reduction in import duty on industrial plant and machinery, limitation of dividends of joint stock companies and income-tax relief to industry. In the speech which I delivered at Chowpatty on 30 October, I have dealt at length with the basic causes which go to retard our progress in the implementation of anti-inflationary measures. I hope for a satisfactory response from the business community of Bombay and from labour to my appeal. I should like to commend to you the need for a similar appeal in your province, so that we may, as I pointed out in my message to the Bombay city, promote a coordinated effort for higher production and lower prices. It is imperative that we have a proper sense of both emergency and urgency, if we are to deal with this hydra-headed monster. We have not only to cut its head, but to cauterise it, so that it does not grow again. We look to the provincial Governments to create a proper atmosphere amongst the public, both in order to make it appreciate the extent of the urgency of the problem and in order to support Government actively in the many measures which it has decided upon. I hope you will succeed in mobilising popular support in your province, particularly amongst the business community and labour in favour of the measures which we have announced.

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12. The Government of India's recent decision to reimpose food controls was taken in consultation with provincial and State administrations, and its implications have been communicated to you in the form of a directive circulated by the Ministry of Food. It is quite clear that our hopes of prices stabilising at a reasonable level some time after decontrol have been falsified. The removal of food controls was followed by profiteering, and later rocketing of food-grain prices ensued. At the same time, it is equally clear that, if the new policy of control has to be successful, it must avoid the unpopularity and the widespread corruption with which previous control became associated in the public mind. We must, therefore, have a vigorous and efficient enforcement of the new policy. Any tendency to treat this policy as another experiment must be avoided at all costs. There is nothing more demoralising to the public than a series of experiments in dealing with one of the basic public wants. I pointed out in my previous letter that drastic measures should be taken against anti-social elements and we should press for deterrent sentences in any case where a hoarder or a profiteer is brought to book. There should also be continuous publicity for public support in the enforcement of controls. We must not lose sight of the fact that these controls are an important part of the measures we have undertaken to fight inflation. We should also take care that what is available—and we hope to make what is available as adequate as our resources would permit—is distributed equitably and at reasonable prices. There are many people who might consider procurement and rationing unnecessary for control. Such an attitude displays a lack of understanding of the essentials of the problem. Procurement and rationing are administrative aids without which price control cannot be effective. I would also like to emphasise the importance of the recommendation adopted by the Ministers' Conference that special arrangements should be made to supply the producer of foodgrains with his requirements of cloth, kerosene, building materials, etc. In my opinion, these are necessary to make procurement drives successful. Steps should also be taken to improve the administrative mechanism of control. Rules and regulations should not be interpreted in a rigid manner, but should be implemented in spirit rather than in letter, and where necessary, these rules should be liberalised.

13. The Government of India in the Ministry of Commerce have decided to constitute an Import Advisory Council to advise in matters of general policy regarding import trade control. The Council will consist of the Hon'ble Minister for Commerce as Chairman,

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six members nominated by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, two members nominated by the Associated Chamber of Commerce and one member nominated by the All-India Manufacturers' Organisation. The Government will also nominate non-official members not exceeding four as representatives of interest not otherwise adequately represented on the Council and two members of the Constituent Assembly. The Council will also include the Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, and four officers representing the Ministries of Industry & Supply, Finance, Food and Transport. Additional members representing local interests of consumers and trade may also be co-opted to attend the meetings held at various ports. We have thus tried to broadbase the constitution of the committee as much as possible and we hope that the Council will serve a useful purpose in influencing Government on popular lines in implementing its import policy.

14. We have also taken an important step in the development of shipping. We have decided to set up corporations, up to three in number, to control Indian shipping. The Scindia Steam Navigation Company—a pioneer in the field—have been selected as the managing agents of the first corporation. I hope this important measure will succeed in putting India on the shipping map of the world.

15. I am writing this letter on the eve of the meeting of the Constituent Assembly which has been convened to give its approval to the Draft Constitution. A great deal of work would remain to be done to complete the preliminaries before the approved Constitution can be enforced. Both the Central and provincial Governments will have to undertake considerable responsibilities in that behalf. I have no doubt that we can count on the willing help and co-operation of provincial Governments in those tremendous undertakings, particularly those connected with the preparation of electoral rolls on adult franchise. You will no doubt make your contribution to the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly, and I am confident that on your return from those deliberations you will see that the machinery of implementation functions with vigour and despatch.

Yours sincerely,
V. J. Patel

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New Delhi
8 November 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

You wrote to me from London about Lt.-Col. Taylor, who was Mountbatten's Surgeon when he was Viceroy and Governor-General of India. I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from Dr. Matthai. That explains the position fully. I doubt if we can do anything further for him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
1 November 1948

My dear Sardar,

Regarding Lt. Colonel Taylor's case about which you wrote to me on 21 October, I have had the facts examined, and find that he has two requests to make. The first relates to the remittance of his leave salary to him in Canada. This was declined under a misapprehension of the rules, and I am arranging for the error to be rectified immediately.

2. The other request relates to permission to remit to Canada a sum of £5,250 made up of savings from Sterling Overseas Pay (£2,250) and retiring compensation grant (£3,000). I am afraid I have not found it possible to accede to this request in view of our dollar position, of which you are fully aware. This officer has already been permitted by the Reserve Bank to remit assets up to £5,000, which is the absolute maximum prescribed under our exchange regulations. Even under the UK regulations capital remittance is limited to this amount, and Lt.-Colonel Taylor would not have been allowed a larger remittance by the Bank of England if he had retired from the UK in similar circumstances. Any relaxation of our regulations in his favour is bound to result in representations for the grant of similar concessional treatment from other retiring and retired Canadian officers, which it would be difficult to resist. You will appreciate how embarrassing it would be for me at

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this juncture to be faced with a large dollar commitment on this account when our position could fairly be described as critical.

Yours sincerely,
John Matthai

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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100 Belgrave Road
London SW 1
7 October 1948

Dear Mr. Patel,

This, as you will see, if as I trust you eventually find time to read it, is a letter written by a nobody to a very busy man—a nobody who, like thousands of his kind in Britain, is a little disapproving of your speeches.

Solely because I know that I can speak for many ordinary people who have had the luck to visit your great and lovely land, I venture to declare I do not like the way you talk and ask you if it's really necessary.

Your recent speech, for instance, complaining of criticism in the House of Commons and (presumably) elsewhere. You will, I know, admit democracy implies the right and obligation to utter and endure criticisms even when they may be ill-informed or biased: no one is always omniscient and just even in this enlightened age! And if you know how small our British papers are these days and how the natural tendency is ever to support the weaker side, you will surely pardon us if we were wrong in regretting India's action over Hyderabad.

You see—if I may say so without sounding offensive—many of us in this country have a real regard for India and her people and were privileged to make friendships during our brief stay. And we believe, without for a moment suggesting our record has been one of unadulterated purity and truth, that to destroy such ties as can and do exist between us will do no one any good. We would like to help you; we would like you to help us. We think there is much we can teach you; we *know* there is much you can teach us.

Even allowing for the necessity that you, Sir, doubtless labour under, of giving India a sense of unity and nationhood, may I with

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all deference beg you to remember none of us can stand alone; if we are ever to have peace on earth, it is internationality, not nationality to which we have to look. In such a cause I would most willingly see this country's sovereignty curtailed.

I am sure you will agree we all of us need to understand, appreciate and know each other better, whatever creed we own, whatever race we be. And in this cause alone, no other, should you yourself be later, or anyone you know be now, in England and would care to call on a very ordinary British home, my wife and I would be delighted to give you welcome to the limits of what the present straitened circumstances permit.

Asking only that this letter may remain unanswered till you yourself find time to answer it in person, and wishing you and your great country peace, progress and prosperity.

I take the liberty to subscribe myself,

Sincerely yours,
Gordon Collyer

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
13 October 1948

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter of 7 October 1948. I much appreciate your writing to me so frankly about it. You have probably misunderstood the position which I have taken up in my speeches. I am not surprised at it, because, generally speaking, we are more misunderstood than understood in Great Britain. I should not like to go into the reasons therefore; the reasons are steeped in both past and recent history.

2. Our position in regard to criticism in the House of Commons is plainly and bluntly this. The affairs of no other Dominion in the Commonwealth are being taken up by the Mother of Parliaments. Why should there be any exception in the case of India? As an instance, look at the treatment that is being meted out to Indians and Africans by the Europeans in South Africa. That question affects millions and is a breach of one of the fundamental rights in the United Nations Charter. It is an offence against the very elementary principle of humanity and human

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brotherhood. Still, not once has any member of Parliament dared to raise that question. Both intrinsically and from the point of view of the population involved, it is much more important than either Kashmir or Hyderabad. How could you explain this? There are many other things being done in the Dominions to which criticism could be levelled in Parliament. Has any member ever dared to raise any debate on those issues? Have you, for instance, debated Ireland? We would not mind it so much if in the debate there was a fair and unprejudiced approach to the question. Instead, we find that on things on which we made our position clear, as, for instance, economic blockade or the position of Hyderabad with reference to external affairs and defence, and for which even documentary proof has been adduced, there is a disposition on the part of practically every member of Parliament either to ignore our stand or to treat it as a matter of no consequence. Would you call that fair debate?

3. I yield to none in my devotion to freedom of expression in a democratic regime. But in the international sphere it is recognised that there should be no attempt to malign a country or to indulge in any criticism which would be tantamount to interference with the domestic autonomy of the country itself. This is much more true of the countries in the Commonwealth than of foreign countries. We have ample evidence of British Press correspondents in this country deliberately misrepresenting both factually and ideologically our stand and events taking place in India, in Pakistan and in Hyderabad. It is on such of these despatches that your papers feed British public opinion. Naturally, if we are not fairly treated and if we are deliberately misrepresented, we must take it amiss. The fact of the matter is, as I pointed out earlier, that India has experienced more of misrepresentation than of correct appreciation.

4. Please do not imagine that I am not a friend of Great Britain. If you come into contact with British officers or others who have come into contact with me, you will realise that my approach to the British people is one of real friendship and sincere co-operation. It is only when I find that the task of promoting friendship between Britain and India is seriously prejudiced by such ill-informed and biased discussions or debates or views and news given in British journals that I have to hit out. I hope you will believe me that if Britain and India are to remain friends, as I wish and hope they would, British public opinion or those who are in a position to guide such opinion must extend to India both sympathy and understanding. I can assure you we need both, and

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we ourselves realise that we have much to gain by continued friendship and to lose by drifting apart.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

G. Collyer, Esq.
100 Belgrave Road
London SW 1

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Santiniketan
Bengal
12 October 1948

Revered Sardarji,

I have had the privilege of meeting you only once at Patna several years ago when I visited Gandhiji there, but I trust you are not unaware of the work of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, with its headquarters in Santiniketan. One of our recent efforts in promoting cultural relations between our two countries has been the starting of the Sino-Indian Journal as an organ of the society. A copy of our first number, along with a few of our other publications, is being sent to you by separate post.

We are planning to bring out the second number of the journal immediately, and we intend to make it in part a homage to the Mahatma, who was greatly interested in our work. I shall be deeply grateful if you will kindly send us a message of encouragement and blessing for publication in the journal. . . .

With deep respects,

Yours sincerely,
Tan Yun-Shan
Editor

H.E. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
20 October 1948

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter of 12 October 1948.

I send you my best wishes for the Sino-Indian Journal and for your own work in India as the cultural representative of the Government of China.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Prof. Tan Yun-Shan
Editor
Sino-Indian Journal
Santiniketan
Bengal

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CHAPTER XVI

ANDHRA WANTS STATEHOOD

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Camp 68 Marine Drive
Bombay
20 January 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I enclose a copy of a telegram which I have received from Nijalingappa,[1] a member of the Constituent Assembly from Karnatak. I learn that the reported assurance has created considerable heartburning in Karnatak. The agitation for separation in Karnatak is being taken up vigorously, and anything that is reported as being done for Andhra rouses a great deal of public antipathy, not only because Karnatak wants separation but also because there are certain areas which are likely to be the subject of dispute between Andhra and Karnatak.

From all these points of view, I am doubtful if any precipitate action, such as the issue of an order in Council to create an Andhra province, will be a wise step. It seems to me that we will have to consider this question very carefully to determine whether any early recognition could be given to such demands for separation.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

[1] President, Karnatak PCC, 1945-46; member, CA and Parliament, 1947-56; Chief Minister, Mysore State, 1956-57 and 1962-68; Congress President until the Congress split in 1969

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ENCLOSURE

TELEGRAM

Hubli
17 January 1948

Deputy Premier
New Delhi

PRAKASAM MADRAS HAS ISSUED PRESS STATEMENT ANNOUNCING PREMIER'S ASSURANCE TO CREATE ANDHRA PROVINCE UNDER SECTION 290 APRIL NEXT. PRAY WIRE WHETHER THIS ASSURANCE TRUE. . . .

NIJALINGAPPA
CONSEMBLY MEMBER AND PRESIDENT
KARNATAK UNIFICATION

371

Fort St. George
Madras
14 October 1948

My dear Sardarji,

With my letter dated 29 September 1948 I forwarded to you copies of my two letters dated 28 and 29 September 1948 to the Hon'ble the Prime Minister requesting him to see that the municipal elections in French India were postponed for at least a year. Within a couple of days thereafter, I found the announcement in the newspapers that the French authorities had postponed the elections. The later reports show that they were only put off from 10 October 1948 to 24 October 1948. This short adjournment of the elections by two weeks will not materially alter the position, unless the defects vitiating the electoral system in French India, which I have set out in my letter of 28 September 1948, are removed.

In this connection, I would invite your attention to the written representations made on 11 October 1948 to the Hon'ble the Prime Minister of India by Shri S. Perumal, Advocate, Pondicherry and ex-Secretary of French Indian Assembly, and by Shri R. Sellam, Advocate, Pondicherry, and ex-President of French Indian Assembly, regarding the impending municipal elections.

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2. As I have already stated in my letters, the ensuing municipal elections are not the usual elections to the Municipal Councils but are intended specially for the coming plebiscite to which they are a preliminary. The existing electoral rules leave much room for malpractices as pointed out in my previous letters. The former practice was for each municipal ward to return a member, but under the new system, wards have been cleverly grouped into multi-member constituencies in order to help the anti-merger parties. I consider that the conversion of the single-member constituencies into multi-member ones is a serious breach of the agreement concluded with the Government of India in June last. I have a feeling that though the French Governor may state in public that he is acting up to the agreement of June 1948, he is not implementing it in its true spirit, but is actively doing everything possible to load the dice against the merger. I do not know whether in re-fixing the elections for 24 October 1948, he is acting on his own accord or is doing so under instructions from the French Government. As stated by Messrs. S. Perumal and R. Sellam in their representations to the Hon'ble the Prime Minister referred to above, the rule requiring 30 days' notice of the elections seems to have been violated. It is also very necessary to have independent Observers on behalf of the Indian Union in order to see that the elections are conducted fairly and properly. I am strongly of opinion that till adequate steps are taken for ensuring fair play in the polling, the elections should be postponed.

I request you therefore kindly to take immediate action and see that the elections are postponed sine die, so that we may have time to examine the several issues arising from this question and take adequate steps to see that the coming referendum truly reflects the real opinion of the people in French India.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
O. P. Ramaswamy Reddy[1]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

[1] O. P. Ramaswamy Reddy: Premier of Madras, 1947

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Government House
New Delhi
19 October 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

The Premier of Madras has sent me a copy of his letter to you dated 14 October and I have replied as enclosed.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Government House
New Delhi
19 October 1948

My dear Reddiar,

I have your letter of 14 October. It seems to me that we are not managing this business as we should. It is difficult to demand the right to have observers in elections to a local body which has to fix procedure for a referendum and is not to dispose of anything itself. It is also difficult to reconcile our previous attitude for immediate action with a demand now for indefinite postponement. I however sympathise with your apprehensions. It appears to me it would be best now for all responsible political bodies in French India to convene an urgent special conference and pass a resolution that the referendum should be held after the present excitement has cooled down and that a period of two or three years may be given for this purpose. My suggestion is that the resolution should refer to the referendum and not to the municipal elections. There would be no harm in allowing the present status to continue for two years more by which time the Indian Constitution will also be ready and people will have had time to consider calmly all issues arising in connection with French India and other foreign territories in India. If this policy is acceptable to our people in French India, they can put it forward and the municipal elections will automatically drop for the present. This is only my personal suggestion and it is for you to judge.

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I gather that when the French Ambassador was in Madras you seem to have given offence to him. He came to New Delhi in high dudgeon.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Shri O. P. Ramaswamy Reddy
Premier of Madras
Madras

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EXTRACT

Chepauk House
Madras 5
17 October 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I had a telegram yesterday from Acharya Jugal Kishore asking me whether I would proceed to Pondicherry as an observer on behalf of the Congress in the ensuing municipal elections which come off on the 24th of this month. I have agreed to do this, but I would like your kind advice as to how I should act as an observer.

Yours affectionately,
P. Subbarayan

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
21 October 1948

Dr. P. Subbarayan
Chepauk House
Madras 5

YOUR LETTER. RAJKUMAR LEAVING TOMORROW MORNING. SINCE YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED AS UNOFFICIAL OBSERVER IT IS ADVISABLE YOU SHOULD GO THERE. ALTHOUGH I AM DOUBTFUL ABOUT ATTITUDE OF LOCAL FRENCH ADMINISTRATION YOU CAN TRY YOUR BEST.

VALLABHBHAI

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New Delhi
20 December 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith copy of a letter which I have received from Shri O. P. Ramaswamy Reddy ex-Premier of Madras. I thought you might be interested in his views, particularly in view of his experience of the Government of Madras.

2. I am also sending you herewith a copy of the telegram which I have received regarding the activities of Nijalingappa.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Omandur (P.O.)
Tindivanam (S.I.R.)
18 December 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I was wanting to discuss with you in person about two important matters which are engaging the attention of almost everyone here, namely, separation of Andhra province and the forthcoming referendum in the French territories. Unluckily, I am in indifferent health and am not in a position to proceed to Delhi. I am therefore writing this letter.

In almost all the discussions on the separation of Andhra province, an important question that appears to have been examined is whether the proposed Andhra province will be a deficit unit or not. That is certainly a legitimate consideration, but it never appears to have occurred to any one seriously to examine whether what is left of the province after Andhra is separated—the so-called "Rest of Madras"—will also be financially sound. My own opinion is that it cannot be. The districts of Malabar, South Kanara, and the three Karnataka taluks of Bellary that will be left behind will be a serious drag on the financial resources of the "Rest." Malabar alone, I understand, would require an annual supply of 3 lakh tons of foodgrains from oustside, an

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undertaking which, in my opinion, would be beyond the capacity of an attenuated "Rest of Madras"; and together these three areas may involve the new "Rest of Madras" unit in a recurring annual net deficit of not less than 1 crore of rupees. This is a consideration which does not appear to have entered into the minds of those who have taken up this work of separation. If by the new act of separation such a deficit occurs, is it not but just that some provision should be made by which the newly formed "Rest of Madras" should at least be as sound as the newly formed "Andhra"? Will the Centre, who agrees to the partition, see to this and give a subvention to fill the gap, or will they jointly with Andhra province agree to meet the deficit? I am drawing your attention to this for taking such action as you may think desirable. If not settled satisfactorily, however much it may be ignored now, it is bound to attract public attention sooner or later, and will permanently injure the slender financial resources of Tamil Nad, which is already facing a serious deficit in food supplies year after year.

Yet another matter. The arrangements that are going on in connection with the coming referendum in the French territories, in my opinion, leave much to be desired. I feel that we have to deal with the French with great caution and circumspection. Knowing as I do something of their electioneering methods, I doubt whether they will play the game. We cannot be too very careful in accepting the Observers chosen for us. We should have an effective voice in the choice of the personnel, and we should satisfy ourselves that they are men of unimpeachable integrity and impartiality. The French Administration including their police invariably plays a significant part in all their elections. Can't we have some sort of "neutral police", failing which get an entry for an adequate number of our own police to jointly supervise the conduct of the referendum? I learn that much ingenuity is being expended by the French on the preparation of faulty electoral rolls, and interested election rules and several other things by which elections are manipulated. We have to devise adequate checks and counterchecks. I hope this matter too would engage your attention in due time.

With namaskarams,

Yours sincerely,
O. P. Ramaswamy Reddy

The Hon'ble Shri Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Fort St. George
24 September 1948

Dear Sardarji,

On 2 October, the 80th birthday of Bapu, the whole of Madras province goes dry. In my tours, I found that the expectations of the people in the province have reached the highest pitch. So, in spite of your advice, we have to satisfy the people's expectations. We all have to work hard to wean the people, especially the addicts, from the demon of drink and build up a new social structure on character. We need your prayers and your blessings on this memorable occasion.

Yours sincerely,
S. Gurubatham

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
27 September 1948

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter of 24 September 1948. I am glad to know that you have been able to go ahead with your prohibition programme. There can be no question of our withdrawing from the policy of prohibition. The only thing was that we are passing through critical times of financial difficulties. If any province can on its own authority and within its own resources implement that programme it is a matter for congratulations. I send you my best wishes for the successful implementation of the programme of prohibition.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. S. Gurubatham
Minister for Firka Development and Prohibition
Fort St. George
Madras

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8 Narasingapuram Street
Mount Road
Madras
4 October 1948

My dear Sardarji,

I am in receipt of a letter in your name today. I am enclosing a copy of that letter. It came in a cover posted from Coimbatore and having the seal of the Coimbatore District Congress Committee on it. The letter does not also contain the date on which it has been written. Taking all this into consideration I am not able to conclude that it is from you. After receiving a letter from you on this, I will start for Delhi to meet you.

Yours sincerely,
K. Kamaraj[1]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

My dear Kamaraj Nadar,

The Premier of Madras has drawn my attention to the resolutions passed by the Tamil Nad Congress Committee at their meeting held in Kuttalam on 28 and 29 August 1948, which were communicated to him in the Secretary's letter dated 9 September 1948. These resolutions raise certain important questions of policy and procedure which require personal discussion. I should, therefore, be glad if you would take an early opportunity of coming to Delhi for that purpose. Please telegraph to me when you could come.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Kamaraj Nadar
President
Tamil Nad Congress Committee
Kuttalam

[1] Joined freedom struggle at a young age; President Tamil Nad PCC, 1940-54; member, CA; Chief Minister of Madras, 1954-63; Congress President, 1964-67; member, Lok Sabha, since 1969

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
6 October 1948

Kamaraj Nadar
Care Congress
Madras

YOUR LETTER DATED 4 OCTOBER. LETTER COPY OF WHICH SENT BY YOU GENUINE. PLEASE COME HERE SOONEST POSSIBLE.

VALLABHBHAI

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150 Harley Street
London W.1
3 February 1948

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Hon. Treasurer
Indian National Army Fund
Home Minister
Government of India
New Delhi

Dear Sir,

The Committee of the Subhas Memorial Indian National Army Fund has authorised the Leicester Square branch of the National Provincial Bank, England, to instruct their representatives in India to hand over the sum of £ 314-9-3 to you as Hon. Treasurer of INA Fund.

The above fund was collected in memory of our late revered and lamented countryman and head of the INA Subhas Chandra Bose, who lost his life in serving our motherland.

This money is to be used for the specific purpose of helping the dependents of those members of the INA who lost their lives in the service of our country under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

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Kindly acknowledge receipt of the amount sent and oblige.

Yours respectfully,
M. D. Thakore
Secretary of Subhas Memorial
INA Fund Committee

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New Delhi
9 April 1948

Dear Shri Shankerrao Deo,

Sardar has asked me to send you the attached papers relating to a remittance of £ 314-9-3 received from the INA Defence Committee, Subhas Memorial Fund of London. There is no 'Subhas Memorial Fund' in Delhi. He, therefore, thought that it would be best to credit it to an account of the AICC. He has signed the receipt and would be glad if you would kindly make arrangements for the credit of this amount to an appropriate account.

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar

Shri Shankerrao Deo
Secretary, AICC
Electric Lane
New Delhi

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82 Daryaganj
Delhi
29 February 1948

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister, India

Sir,

I have been authorised by the INA Advisory Committee to convey their heartfelt thanks and appreciation for the trouble you took today in attending the meeting of the INA Enquiry & Relief Committee, where you kindly explained in great detail the point of view of the Government regarding the INA and heard with patience the views expressed by INA officers in their individual capacity.

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The INA Advisory Committee at their meeting specially convened after the morning session, referred to above, carefully considered the whole position and have authorised me to convey to you the following memorandum which contains the unanimously accepted views of the said Committee:

1. The only honourable solution is for the INA personnel to be reinstated in the regular army in their relative ranks.

The impression has been created that the reinstatement of the INA in the Indian Army would be detrimental to its stability. We, on the other hand, feel that instead of leading to any deterioration, the reabsorption of the INA officers and men would enhance the discipline and strengthen the morale of the Defence Forces. Our reasons for this are as follows:

(a) The INA had to fight and live under very adverse conditions which required a much higher standard of discipline than in any army which is required to fight under normal active conditions.

(b) The entire training of the INA was based on love and service of the country.

The above impression about the INA referred to at the beginning of this para has been caused, we feel, by:

(a) calculated and subtle anti-INA propaganda of the British;

(b) undue delay in a decision as to the future of the INA.

2. It would be pertinent to add here that after reinstatement the actual number of officers and men who would be eligible to be maintained on the active list would only be a fraction of the total number because a vast majority would have been superannuated by 1946, during which year they were discharged from the army by the British. Those officers and men who were so entitled to pensions, gratuities etc. should have their total service reckoned up to the date of their discharge. In certain quarters it has been suggested that the services of the INA personnel should be considered terminated from the date they joined the INA. This we feel would be an insult to the great cause for which the INA fought, and which we considered the worthiest part of our service.

There is an urgent need for the grant of adequate pensions to the families of Shaheeds [martyrs] and disabled.

3. A number of auxiliary units are being raised both by the Central and provincial Governments. The officers and men of

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the INA would be entirely willing to serve in those units or in State Forces as seconded officers and men from the regular army.

4. Since our release all INA personnel have maintained cordial relations with the members of the Indian Armed Forces, and we have no doubt whatsoever that on reinstatement we would be welcomed back and form one homogeneous whole with them.

5. The INA, as an organisation, has kept entirely aloof from politics and in general has maintained discipline. Some individuals undoubtedly have taken part in politics, but this they have done in their individual capacity.

In conclusion we would request that careful consideration be given to our memorandum and an early decision about the INA be announced.

I have also the honour to attach herewith a copy of a resolution passed by the INA Advisory Committee at their meeting on 28-2-48.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
J. K. Bhonsle
Chairman
[INA Advisory Committee]

EXTRACTS FROM A DEFENCE MINISTRY NOTE FOR THE CABINET

In December 1946, the Government of India reviewed their policy in respect of ex-INA personnel and, as far as civilian employment was concerned, it was decided that Government servants who belonged to the INA and who were not guilty of acts of brutality should not be debarred from Government service other than in the Armed Forces. Requests continue to be received from time to time for the removal of this ban, and for the reinstatement in the Armed Forces of those desirous of being so reinstated, having due regard to their seniority.

It will be noticed that all ex-INA personnel who were classified "Black" and "Grey" were subjected to various disciplinary penalties for their participation in the INA. It has been urged on behalf of the ex-INA personnel that even if the individuals are not reinstated, these penalties should be squashed.

It is difficult to gauge the extent of popular support behind these two outstanding requests of ex-INA personnel. . . . There is very little doubt, however, as to the point of view of the Armed Forces on the proposal to reinstate

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the ex-INA personnel. For a variety of reasons—the upsetting of seniority and of promotions already made which it would involve, divided loyalties and the difference in ideology which it would introduce among them—they would regard its acceptance as most inadvisable and a step definitely in the wrong direction. The effect on the morale of both the officers and of the men would, it is felt, be extremely serious. The Ministry of Defence consider, therefore, that the ban on re-employment of ex-INA personnel in the Armed Forces should not be removed.

As regards the second request, namely, the restoration of pay and allowances, release benefits, pensions etc. of the ex-INA personnel (other than those who belong to, or have gone over to Pakistan), again, it is the view of the Defence Ministry that it would be inadvisable to concede it. A less rigid attitude on this point, however, might be adopted and if for political reasons it is felt to be expedient to help these people economically in some substantial way, the Defence Ministry would not press its opposition to this proposal.

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New Delhi
8 April 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

You have probably received a letter from General Bhonsle about our decision regarding the INA. If you agree I shall send a reply as in the attached letter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Major-General J. K. Bhonsle
Officer in Charge, INA Inquiry and Relief Commitee
Congress House, Bombay-4

Thank you for your letter of 4 April 1948. The decision announced by Jawaharlal is a well-considered Cabinet decision. It was reached after full consideration of the views expressed at the last meeting of the INA Inquiry and Relief Committee, held on 29 February 1948 in Delhi. Before taking the matter in the Cabinet, it was fully considered first in the Executive

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Committee and then in a full Congress Assembly Party meeting. After the Cabinet decision was taken it was announced in the Assembly. It is, therefore, now profitless for any one of you to create any agitation about this matter. Having regard to the various circumstances and factors involved, the Government have done its best to do all that could possibly be done. No useful purpose will be served by calling any further convention and I feel that the decision may be accepted.

2. As regards securing of employment, there are other alternative avenues open and we should concentrate our efforts in fully exploiting them rather than on any fruitless criticism of Government's decision which may perhaps adversely affect our efforts in the other direction.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
10 April 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter about the INA. I do not remember receiving any letter from Major-General Bhonsle but it may have come. Gadgil sent me a letter he had received from Bhonsle.

I have nothing much to say about your draft reply. It might however be stated that while we said that there will be no reinstatement of INA as such, there is no individual bar to INA men being taken even in the Army subject to suitability. In fact, quite a number of INA men have been taken in our Irregular Forces in the Punjab and Kashmir, including some INA officers. I am sure that there is plenty of scope for the INA men in the new Forces that are being raised as Home Guards, Irregulars, State Forces, etc., apart from civil employment. If we have the full co-operation of the INA Committee in this matter, we hope to get employment for all these people.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
15 July 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of 26 June about the INA budget.

I entirely agree with you that the sooner we wind up this fund the better. But how can we wind it up so long as we have any money left? Some disposition of it will have to be made. Perhaps the best thing is to pass the budget for three months now and await developments.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
21 July 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 15 July 1948 about the INA budget.

I am sending a further sum of Rs. 50,000 for expenditure during the months July-September as advised by you. I suggest that whatever amount is left by 1 October should be placed in trust for assistance to the daughter of Subhas Babu about whom we had correspondence some time ago. It does not seem that Sarat Babu [Sarat Chandra Bose, elder brother of Subhas Bose] will do anything for her.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
22 July 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 21 July about the INA budget.

I rather like the idea of a sum being set aside in trust for assistance to the daughter of Subhas Bose. Sarat Bose has refused to have anything to do with her. But do you think it is quite in accordance with the objects of the collection for INA relief? In any event, it would be desirable to consult the INA Committee about it.

I have no idea how much money you have left. I do not think that any large sum need be set aside for the daughter. Probably about Rs. 25,000 would do.

I would suggest that meanwhile some money, say, Rs. 1,000, be sent to the mother for the daughter. This could easily be arranged through [A. C. N.] Nambiar, who will be returning to Switzerland early next month and who knows the mother well. He could also supply us with further particulars about the mother and daughter.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
26 July 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 22 July 1948 about the INA budget. It should be quite easy to justify assistance to Subhas Bose's daughter out of the INA funds. Subhas Bose was the Commander-in-Chief of the INA and, therefore, assistance can be given to his family out of the INA funds.

2. As far as I can see, there should be ample funds at our disposal to set aside for the daughter. In the meantime, I am

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asking Dhirubhai [Desai][1] to get in touch with Nathalal who is already in Europe, and arrange to send to the daughter assistance in kind up to a maximum of Rs. 1,000. He would be able to ascertain what assistance is required since he is on the spot. I have also asked him to get some further information about the family.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
23 September 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Please refer to the correspondence resting with my letter of 21 July 1948 about the INA Inquiry & Relief Committee. On your advice I agreed to make a further allotment for the period July to September.

I have now received another request from them asking for allotment of funds for the quarter October to December 1948. At the same time, I discovered that large amounts of loans granted by the Committee were still outstanding. A statement sent by them shows a total outstanding of over Rs. 10,000. In addition Rs. 8,000 are due from one Mr. Ram Sarup who is reported to have misappropriated the sum. I came to know of it only when the other day Col. Stracey came to me before handing over charge. The same applies to an amount of Rs. 500 due from Col. Negi. These amounts have been outstanding for a long time and no intimation was sent to me. Personally, I feel that the whole business should be wound up as soon as possible.

I shall be grateful for your advice as to what I should do in regard to their request for further funds.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

[1] Son of Bhulabhai Desai and Indian Ambassador in Switzerland

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New Delhi
24 September 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of 23 September about the INA Relief Fund.

I really do not know what to suggest. I do not know how they are spending the money and what the state of the fund is. I agree with you that the sooner we wind this fund up the better. If you could ask some competent person to go into this matter of how they are using the funds and how many of the old INA are still at a loose end and deserving support, this report would help you in coming to a decision. It should not take much time to prepare this report. Meanwhile, if you like, you can give them some sum to tide over any present difficulty.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Mussoorie
14 May 1948

My dear Baldev Singh,

I am sending herewith a copy of my letter to Jawaharlal. I should be glad if you would kindly let me know what our own information is about this and what your Air Headquarters think of it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh
Minister for Defence
New Delhi

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ENCLOSURE

Camp Birla House
Mussoorie
14 May 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

I wonder if your attention has been drawn to the attached cutting from the Statesman, Dak edition, of 14 May 1948, about the arrival of 700 RAF craftsmen in Pakistan. Pakistan Radio has also repeated this news. It is very disquieting and would require very careful consideration on our part. We should perhaps ascertain something more about it through our High Commissioner. It is possible our Defence Ministry may know something about it. I am, therefore, sending a copy of this letter to Baldev Singh.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

STATESMAN REPORT FROM ITS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE IN PAKISTAN

Karachi, 12 May—Seven hundred RAF craftsmen and ground engineers arrived this morning aboard the s. s. Franconia on a three year spell of duty with the Pakistan Air Force. They will be attached to PAF units and instructors in ground engineering, maintenance and repairs. They will come under the command of Group Captain Elmsworthy.

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17 Tughlak Road
New Delhi
15 May 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Kindly refer to your letter dated 14 May regarding Pakistan employing RAF craftsmen and technicians. I also saw the same report in the Press and asked Air Marshal Sir Thomas Elmhirst who has just come from the United Kingdom. He confirmed that the report is correct. The Pakistan Air Force has been

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extremely deficient specially in technical staff with the result that most of their aircraft were grounded. For that reason they have brought in a large number of technical personnel as well as pilots from the United Kingdom and according to my information, also from Ireland and other European countries.

Yours sincerely,
Baldev Singh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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Mussoorie
18 May 1948

My dear Baldev Singh,

Thank you for your letter of 15 May 1948 regarding the employment of RAF craftsmen and technicians.

Now that the news is reported to be correct, I suggest that we should very carefully consider its repercussions on ourselves; the extent to which our Air Force would require strengthening, the question whether in the event of hostilities between India and Pakistan this personnel would be available to the Pakistan Government, and to what extent our own technical and ground staff would require superior training in order to compare favourably with Pakistan's trained personnel—these would require urgent consideration. I suggest that this matter may be taken up as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh
New Delhi

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New Delhi
20 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of 14 May about the 700 RAF craftsmen going to Pakistan. We are enquiring into this matter. It is possible that most of these persons were merely passing through Pakistan. I understand from Elmhirst that there was a big routine flight of

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the RAF towards Singapore. But this does not appear to be sufficient explanation and further enquiries are being made.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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New Delhi
22 May 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

This is in continuation of my letter of 20 May about the 700 RAF craftsmen going to Pakistan. I have made enquiries about this from H. M. Patel and Air Marshal Elmhirst. The Air Marshal tells me that on the partition of the Air Force, Pakistan found itself without any technicians and has been making strenuous efforts to get RAF technicians on contract. Without them, the Air Marshal thinks that the Pakistan Air Force might as well be wound up, as it would be impossible to keep two squadrons in flight without an overhaul and repair organisation. India, on the contrary, was fortunate enough to have a large number of technicians on its hands and we have, therefore, not felt the necessity of borrowing technicians from the UK.

The figure of 700 seems to be exaggeration. The Air Marshal thinks that the correct figure is 200 which is what he has heard in London and what has been reported both by the Times correspondent from Karachi and also by the Dawn.

I do not think it is worth pursuing this matter further.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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New Delhi
19 May 1948

My dear Sardar Sahib,

The other day you saw a report in the Press about the arrival of 700 RAF craftsmen in Pakistan. I give below another report which appeared in the Statesman of 13 May:

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"The Society of British Aircraft Constructors, a parent body of the British aircraft industries, is to open an office in Karachi during the next few weeks.

The overseas organisation of SBAC is responsible for the servicing and maintenance of British aircraft in Pakistan, including the provision of technicians and spare parts to civilian airlines, private owners and the RPAF.

Group Captain Tudor, the representative in the Far East, said that the Society realized the increasing importance of Karachi on world air routes. The British aircraft industry is taking steps so that the industry may be of the greatest possible help to Pakistan."

Enquiries go to show that this is also true. You will see from the above that Pakistan is making an all-out effort to improve and strengthen its air force without any fear of what it might cost them.

Yours sincerely,
Baldev Singh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Mussoorie

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Government House
New Delhi
19 July 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Please see the enclosed. I am surprised that the story is published. It will surely disturb the public mind and create an atmosphere not at all conducive either to justice or to good politics. If there is no truth in the story, it should be contradicted in suitable language. If the fact was that we just agreed to include the subject among several other subjects for discussion at the Inter-Dominion Conference, it is something different from what is made to appear in Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan's interview.

It seems to me unsatisfactory that API headquarters should publish news of this kind without first getting your views. I think it is absolutely necessary that they should be told that in all such matters where they can see for themselves the need for consultation with your Ministry, they should consult you before

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publication of such news-items so as to minimize harm, if not obviate it.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

Karachi, 18 July, — Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Minister for Refugees and Rehabilitation, Pakistan, in an interview here today said that Mr. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Minister without Portfolio, India, in a telephonic talk with him this morning assured him that the Government of India would not execute the death sentence passed on Abdul Ghani Qureshi until the matter had been discussed between the Governments of India and Pakistan.

Last week the East Punjab High Court confirmed the death sentence passed on Qureshi by a Delhi Sessions Judge for the murder in September last of Dr. Joshi—API (Pakistan).

The Hindustan Times
19 July 1948

398

New Delhi
20/21 July 1948

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 July 1948. It is for Gopalaswami to contradict the news to which you refer, if it is incorrect. The fact, however, is that in his correspondence with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Jawaharlal has already agreed to consider the question of Dr. Qureshi's transfer to West Punjab on its merits after the appeal was decided and not to execute the sentences in any individual case like that of Dr. Qureshi until we have decided what our attitude should be after taking into consideration such representation as the Pakistan Government might make. As far as I can see, the news-item does not contain any other position than this.

2. I am very doubtful whether in such small matters we should require API to consult us previous to publishing the news.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari
New Delhi

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New Delhi
10 August 1948

My dear Gopalaswami,

I have seen the latest telegram from Pakistan on the question of exchange of prisoners. I need hardly say that I am entirely opposed to their proposal that Dr. Qureshi should be included in the first batch. If we did so, there is no knowing what the Pakistan Government might do with the rest of the batch in order again to blackmail us into a decision convenient from their point of view. I, therefore, feel that we must adhere to his inclusion in the last batch and that we should insist on simultaneous exchange of prisoners.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
Minister without Portfolio
New Delhi

400

New Delhi
18 October 1948

My dear Gopalaswami,

I understand that the Pakistan Government have not given us a complete list of prisoners not willing to go to India, and that we have information that there are some non-Muslims in Pakistan jails who have not been shown by the Pakistan Government in the lists of prisoners to be transferred. This reflects very adversely on the reliability of the list which has been supplied to us by the Pakistan Government. As I told you earlier several times, I would not let Qureshi being handed over to Pakistan until we were quite sure that we had got all our transferable non-Muslims into India from West Pakistan. Once we let him go and we have sent away the last transferable Muslim prisoner, we shall have no bargaining power left, with the result that the remaining non-Muslim prisoners in West Punjab will just rot there.

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I am, therefore, definitely of the view that we should not allow Qureshi to go, until we are quite sure that the list is complete and that all the transferable prisoners are actually brought into Ferozepur and handed over to us.

Bhide, Home Secretary of the East Punjab Government, is staying on tomorrow and if you like any details, he will furnish them to you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Mr. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
New Delhi

401

New Delhi
9 September 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

The other day you asked me for my views about Mohan Singh Mehta. I do not rate his talents or abilities high; he seems to be possessed only of moderate ability.

I would instead suggest the name of the Raja Sahib of Phaltan. As a Prince, he has been progressive; though his State is small, he handed over a fairly good surplus to the Bombay Government. His wife is educated and has been a prominent social worker in Maharashtra. I feel that he shoud do very well as an Ambassador.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
24 September 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

You must have read of the savage sentences passed on the accused for the Shikarpur bomb outrage case in Karachi. I do not mind the sentences of imprisonment in view of the fact that

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the accused are included in our scheme for the exchange of prisoners. But it is clear that the heavy sentences of fine have been inflicted with a view to make the prisoners lose as much of their property as possible. The court must have known that the prisoners were to be exchanged and it seems that the heavy fines have been inflicted deliberately. I suggest that we take up this matter with the Pakistan Government, so that the sentences of fine on exchange prisoners are remitted.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

403

New Delhi
18 November 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter from Liaquat Ali Khan. I do not suppose there is much room for a reply.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Karachi
15 November 1948

My dear Pandit Nehru,

I received your personal and confidential letter dated 3 October about the Khan brothers and the Khudai Khidmatgars in London. Although I knew the main facts and could have replied to your letter straightaway, I wanted to investigate for myself before sending an answer if there was any ground for the allegation of cruelty made in your letter.

Ordinarily, I would have been inclined to regard a letter on this subject as inconsistent with international usage and propriety but, recognising as I do the spirit of goodwill which has impelled you to write, I am replying with equal frankness and friendliness.

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I do not know what your sources of information are about the conditions in the North-West Frontier Province, but I would earnestly ask you not to credit the amazing accounts of repression and persecution which have apparently reached you. I completed my second tour of the province some time ago and I can claim from personal knowledge that for the first time in many years of the history of the Frontier conditions of tranquillity have been achieved in that area with the exercise of least possible restraint on personal liberty and without the use of the armed forces as was the case in the days of British rule.

As regards the Khan brothers and the Khudai Khidmatgars generally, I should like to say that such action as the local authorities have reluctantly been compelled to take to circumscribe their activities has been taken after the most careful consideration. It may interest you to know that the Quaid-i-Azam had long personal discussions with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and that I have myself had frank talks with Dr. Khan Sahib and others. We invited them to collaborate with us on equal and honourable terms in the service of Pakistan. I regret to say that this offer met with no response from the Khan brothers, although a large number of prominent Red Shirt leaders and their followers have been wholeheartedly co-operating with us in the great task of the consolidation and progress of our State. The action that the provincial Government were forced to take against the Red Shirt organisation was not taken without a most careful weighing up of the requirements of internal security and integrity of Pakistan. It was not till they were fully satisfied about the highly dangerous and disruptive character of the activities of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and some of his followers and their continued refusal to change their attitude that the provincial Government decided to place restrictions on them. To suggest that they have been "treated with cruelty" is indeed to use a harsh and ill-deserved expression. I am sure that your impressions in this respect have been derived from an incomplete knowledge of the correct position. I should, however, like to add that I am very glad to receive your assurance that India has in no way encouraged the Khan brothers or the Khudai Khidmatgars to adopt a rebellious attitude towards Pakistan. For my part, I can assure you that action against them has been taken in no spirit of political victimisation but in the vital interests of the security of the State.

The treatment of minorities and the tone of the Press in the two Dominions will come up for a discussion in the Inter-Dominion Conference which is being held shortly and at which, I hope, constructive policies will be agreed upon.

In the end, I must state that I greatly value your personal reiteration of India's non-aggressive intentions towards Pakistan. Let me assure you that Pakistan unhesitatingly and wholeheartedly reciprocates this sentiment. As I told you in Paris, it is my earnest desire that our two countries should be able

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to eradicate all present causes of friction between them and enter side by side upon a long era of uninterrupted amity and collaboration.

Yours sincerely,
Liaquat Ali Khan

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister of India
London

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New Delhi
15 October 1948

My dear Rajaji,

I have seen the full text of your speech to the Indian Military Academy as published in The Hindu of 11 October 1948. I am surprised to read the following passage:

> "I am not quite sure whether you like it, but I tell you the fact that everybody in India now is war-minded. Everybody talks of war and wants war."

I do not know whether you have been correctly reported, but if you have been, it is quite likely that this passage would be made use of by our critics and enemies abroad in proof of the allegations being made against us that we are war-minded and that there is a war mentality abroad in India. Even Bevin gave expression to those sentiments and we protested strongly against it. You will agree that an impression that you, as Governor-General, bear testimony to these feelings would be most unfortunate and damaging.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Governor-General of India
Government House
New Delhi

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Government House
New Delhi
16 October 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thanks for your letter about "everybody being now war-minded." I was talking about the popularity of the service today as against the prejudice of the old days. But I suppose I had also in the back of the mind the people who found fault with the Government for not taking quick action against Hyderabad etc. and it may have got mixed up. On the whole my speech was intended to cheer up the Defence Services and explain to the people the new relationship between the Army and the people. If any one takes my words as confession of general war-mindedness, then too let the fact remain that we as Government restrain with difficulty the impatience of the people with wrong-doers.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
India

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CHAPTER XVII

SOCIALIST PARTY'S ROLE

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New Delhi
9 February 1948

My dear Rajen Babu/Gulzarilal,

You will be interested to read the enclosed copy of a letter which I have received from Mukut Dhari Singh. (I hope Khandubhai [Desai] has got over his illness.)

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

Shri Gulzarilal Nanda
Minister for Labour
Bombay

ENCLOSURE

P.O. Jharia (Manbhum)
Bihar
Jharia
30 January 1948

Respected Sardarji,

Excuse me for venturing to write a few words to you, knowing fully well your important and urgent preoccupations. I believe you have not forgotten me. When I met you in Wardha last, in August 1946, little did I know that your prophecy about the Socialist Party of India was to come so true. But it has actually happened like that and I have found it impossible to work with them and have resigned. I have been reading your speeches about the labour movement very carefully and feel that real industrial truce must be maintained till our new-born State is strengthened and stabilised.

But here in our coalfields things are moving otherwise, and one strike after another is hampering production and keeping the peace of the coalfields

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disturbed. If there were real grievances and the workers went on strike to get them redressed, one could tolerate them—at least sympathise with them. But when we know it for certain that these strikes are being caused for the sole purpose of capturing leadership or power and workers are being used as pawns on the chessboard of party politics, we shudder to think as to what is in store for our country. But the worst part of it is that the Government's mind does not seem to be clear. Excuse me when I say that many of these strikes could not have lasted even for a week if local Government officials had not shown unusual favour to the strike leaders, especially the Socialists, and had not given them all indirect and direct support.

Take for instance the strike in Tata's collieries. Nothing can be more unjustified than this strike and everybody knows it. Still you will be surprised to know that those who want to go to work and do not want to be on strike are driven back at the point of lathis by the strikers and the officials in charge of law and order are all the time laughing and chatting with the strike leaders.

Anyway, I write these few words in good faith and as an humble servant of the workers. And this for the simple reason that your mind alone appears to be clear about the shape of things to come. All Left parties, especially the Socialist Party of India, are preparing for the future elections and the capture of power. When this is so, would it not be dangerous to follow a policy of appeasement and allow them to consolidate their position? This is exactly being done, and the Government is giving them the prominence which they do not deserve. Believe me when I say that your officials are sabotaging the Government, and nothing is being done either to implement the resolution of the Industrial Conference or the resolution of the Congress Working Committee. A policy of drift is dangerous and must be put an end to. The position is more serious than what I can express in my letter. If ever I get an opportunity of meeting you, I can place you in possession of full facts.

As for myself, I have resigned from the Socialist Party but have not as yet joined the INTUC. I had a talk with Shri Khandubhai at Patna but could not make up my mind then. Now I have made up my mind and propose joining it in the near future because I feel that in this hour of national crisis, the INTUC must be strengthened. I shall be addressing a letter in this connection to Shri Khandubhai.

This letter has become a little bit lengthy and may cause you inconvenience, but I have ventured to address you because today you are the only hope of India and can deliver the goods.

Beg to be excused for encroaching upon your valuable time,

Obediently yours,
Mukut Dhari Singh

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Government House
Calcutta
4 March 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

With reference to Lala Deshbandhu Gupta's Bill to amend Section 99A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, my Ministry's views as well as my personal views have been forwarded by my Government to your Ministry. Under the present order of things the administration of law and order has been left entirely to the provinces and the Centre can only give unofficial directives. The need for uniformity of policy between the different provinces is therefore all the greater. Whenever any provincial Government, for reasons of security, issues orders banning or forfeiting objectionable literature, they should be automatically enforced by all other provinces. The occasions on which orders passed by an initiating province may be prejudicial to the interests of another province of the Indian Union, will be so rare that it would be better to provide that when any individual province does not wish to follow suit that province may be allowed to do so, but it should be obligatory on that province to report the circumstances to the Centre and act according to any directive that the Centre may issue. In other words, my view is that when one province issues an order it should, so to say, be binding on all other provinces except in special circumstances. This would be much better than the initiating province being required to seek the co-operation of other provinces on each and every occasion and to create so many separate sovereign States in regard to law and order. The origin of the Bill can probably be traced to the Satyarth Prakash incident in Sind, and the idea of the amendment was conceived at a time when there was no uniformity of policy between the Muslim League Governments in Sind, Punjab and Bengal and the Congress Governments of the other provinces of British India. The possibility of a conflict of ideas between the different provinces of the Indian Union is now remote. The need for uniformity of action in security matters is so great and delay in simultaneous action may cause so much mischief that it would be unsafe to make provisions designed to suit circumstances which are likely to occur on very rare occasions.

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Excuse my writing at such length on a matter which ultimately will receive your careful attention.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

408

Dehra Dun
21 June 1948

Dear Lady Cripps,

Sushila is leaving for the UK and my father and I thought we should send you a few words of greetings and good wishes to both of you and your daughter.

Since we last wrote to each other many things have happened in India and many difficulties and problems have overtaken us. We have been battling against them with determination and vigour, and I hope we have succeeded in a large measure in dealing with them. Sympathy of friends like both of you in such a critical situation is a great asset to us. I wish we could have it from many others whom we would like to count amongst our friends, but past prejudices and preconceived notions seem to stand in the way.

You might have read about father's illness. He has now made as good a recovery as is possible, having regard to the conditions of work and the situation prevailing in the country.

As soon as Delhi cools down, we propose to return there. With kindest regards and best wishes from both of us to yourself, Sir Stafford and your daughter,

Yours sincerely,
Maniben Patel

Lady [Stafford] Cripps
London

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Government House
New Delhi
21 June 1948

My dear Maniben,

The letter which you and your father have sent me on the eve of our departure from India has touched me beyond words, and I thank you from my heart for all your warm and generous messages.

I think you and Sardarji will realise the high privilege it has been to count you both among my friends and colleagues and to serve India in any way I could and the many kindnesses which we all three have received from you and your father have meant much to us and we are grateful for your confidence and your friendship at all times.

Pamela joins me in this message and asks me to say how sad she was not to have been able to come to Dehra Dun to say goodbye to you both and to thank you for your messages of friendship and good wishes. The ties which I have established with India are such that I feel it is inevitable that I should return to try and serve her in the future and one of the things I look forward to above all else is to meet you and Sardarji again. We will always treasure the photograph which you were good enough to send us and with which we feel so happy.

With all love, gratitude and admiration,

Yours sincerely and affectionately,
Edwina Mountbatten of Burma

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
24 June 1948

Earl Mountbatten of Burma
16 Chester Street
London
S.W.I.

HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES ON YOUR BIRTHDAY. MAY YOUR FUTURE BE MORE GLORIOUS THAN THE PAST IS OUR HUMBLE

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AND SINCERE PRAYER. INDIA IS GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR REMARKABLE SERVICES RENDERED BY YOU BOTH.

VALLABHBHAI MANIBEN

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Treasury Chambers
Great George Street
S.W.I.
July 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

This is to introduce to you my brother-in-law Sir Alfred Egeston and my sister Ruth who are true friends of India. I hope very much that you and Maniben may be able to spare the time to see them. I am so glad to hear you are better again and I do hope that you will keep fit and not overdo it, though I know how useless it is to say that to you.

All our most affectionate feelings to you both,

Yours sincerely,
Stafford Cripps

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

412

New Delhi
14 September 1948

Dear Sir Stafford Cripps,

Thank you for your letter which was given to me by your sister and brother-in-law. I was so glad to meet them, but am sorry that it was only towards the end of their stay that we could meet. They saw me only today and are leaving Delhi tomorrow.

However, my meeting with them brought back to me the pleasant recollections of our mutual contact when you were here. I am delighted to hear from them that you are getting on fine and that you are still persisting in your old habits of hard work and vegetarianism. I need hardly say that I am trying to emulate your example.

Lord Mountbatten must have told you all about us and our affairs. After he left our relations with Hyderabad have further

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deteriorated but, thank God, they have come to a decisive stage. The prognostications of communal trouble with which we had been threatened from many quarters have so far not materialised. We have taken every precaution that we could to deal with trouble if it arises and to nip it in the bud. I am personally quite confident that we shall avoid it.

Our greatest headache is still the economic question. We are trying to grapple with it as best as we can, but there are severe limitations, particularly in the external market and in foreign exchange, within which we have to work. We have had several discussions but have now come near enough to final decisions. I admire the ability, tenacity and skill with which you are dealing with this problem at your end. I feel certain that a lot of political stability and moderation depends on the way in which you and we solve our respective economic problems. We have all realised how helpful your attitude was in regard to sterling balances and are grateful for your assistance.

With kindest regards and best wishes from us both to Lady Cripps and yourself,

Yours very sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Right Honourable Sir Stafford Cripps
Chancellor of the Exchequer
Treasury Chambers
Great George Street, S.W.1
London (UK)

413

Ahmedabad
18 July 1949

Dear Vallabhbhai,

Re: Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference at Stockholm

Herewith a copy of a letter which I am writing to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the question of sending a delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference to be held at Stockholm from 7 to 12 September 1949.

I have asked my secretary (Mr. Kaul) to see you and convey to you such information as you may want, and give me such advice as you think proper. You will do all this consistent

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with your health. In case your health does not permit the consideration of this question, please drop it altogether. The matter is not of such importance that you should be troubled about this.

Please remember us to all.

Best wishes to Maniben.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
G. V. Mavalankar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Ahmedabad
18 July 1949

Dear Panditji,

Re : Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference at Stockholm

You remember last year we sent two observers, Shri Diwakar and Dr. Keskar, to the Inter-Parliamentary Conference at Rome at the invitation of Lord Stansgate, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Thereafter we have taken steps to form an Inter-Parliamentary Group after having a resolution of the Assembly for the purpose. The constitution is adopted, and I am the Chairman. It was my idea to elect the executive committee and other office-bearers after some members were enrolled. Till now 61 members have paid their subscription fees, while 57 have expressed a desire to be members, but have not yet paid their fees. Under the constitution only those who have paid the fees are members.

2. The annual session of the conference is to be held this year at Stockholm from 7 to 12 September 1949. It is, therefore, necessary that we should decide :

(1) As to whether we should send representatives at all;

(2) if, so, how many; and

(3) which members of the Assembly.

3. The usual procedure is that the matter is considered by the executive committee and then decisions are taken by the President in the light of the views of the executive committee. This year, however, the difficulty is that no executive committee is yet elected, and a decision has to be taken without delay. I was thinking of having informal consultations with you and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and a few members of the Group, and then decide all the

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above three questions. I find, however, that the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi meetings are now postponed to 14 August, and I am not, therefore, coming to Delhi on the 24th instant, as originally arranged. I shall be coming there on 14 August and shall stay till 21 August. The questions relating to the Stockholm Conference have, therefore, to be discussed and settled by correspondence.

4. I had already stated to my secretary in previous correspondence that I was not in favour of sending a larger number of delegation because of the necessity for economising sterling, and even economy in expenditure. I feel that we must not lose the annual contact with world parliamentarians, and, therefore, we should send a delegation which need not be large. I was thinking of sending three people and the secretary. Some friends urge on me that the delegation should consist of five and the secretary. It may appear to be small, but my view is that in a large administration we must insist upon every small economy, as the total of all economies becomes a large sum.

5. I have not yet made up my mind as to the personnel of the delegation, but I think I should select people who have not gone out recently in delegation. The delegation has to be selected from private members, as it does not represent the Government of the country, and the object is to have a free discussion for the private use of members. Inclusion of any Ministers in the delegation is likely to embarrass both the delegates as well as the Government.

6. I am thinking of the following:

1. Shri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Deputy Speaker, as Leader of the delegation
2. Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru
3. Shri Tajammul Hussain
4. Dr. Punjab Rao Deshmukh
5. Seth Govind Das
6. Shri Mohanlal Gautam
7. Pandit Mukut Beharilal Bhargava

We may select any three out of these, or out of such other names as you or friends may have to suggest.

7. As we shall be sending this delegation year after year, we may send next year any person who would like to go and ought to be sent, but is left out this year.

8. A suggestion is made to me that I should also send such persons as would like to go at their own cost. Prima facie it does not appeal to me. In the first place, it does not solve the problem of preservation of exchange, and secondly, we ought not to send people merely because they are spending their own.

9. I have troubled you with this long letter as the names have to go by the end of this month. I am directing my secretary to see you in this connection

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and give you such information as you want, and let me have your reactions. Such a procedure will give you a better idea of the points involved, and it will save you time of correspondence with me.

10. I am sending a copy of this to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also, who will be approached by my secretary for the same purpose and will let me know his reactions.

I am doing well and wish you the same.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
G. V. Mavalankar

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
20 July 1949

My dear Mavalankar,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 July 1949.

I think we should send a delegation. After all, it is these inter-parliamentary contacts which have both educative and goodwill value. On the whole, I think a delegation of three with a secretary would be adequate. I would suggest the following:

1. Shri Kala Venkatarao
2. Shrimati Durgabai
3. Shri K. Hanumanthiah

or

4. Shri Mohanlal Gautam.

I have been unable to decide between Hanumanthiah and Gautam. Hanumanthiah would be representing the [Princely] States, whereas Gautam would be representing Northern India.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri G. V. Mavalankar
Ahmedabad

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New Delhi
28 September 1948

My dear Major-General Thimayya,

I am sorry to hear of the sad loss which you have suffered in the death of your younger brother. He has died for a noble cause, because of his country, and that should be some consolation, if there can be any consolation while mourning the death of a brother still in the prime of his life. Please accept my sincerest condolences.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Major-General Thimayya
C/o Lt.-General Cariappa
4 King George's Avenue
New Delhi

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HQ Srinagar Division
The Field
11 October 1948

My dear Sardar,

I want to thank you for your kind letter of sympathy which has made me very proud of my brother's death in battle, and all the more so as he was serving under my command. We will continue to fight our enemies and die if necessary to defend our freedom and rid this country of a plague to enable you, our leaders, to make our country the one of our dreams.

I know the boy's father will be very proud of your letter and it will help to soften the blow which he has had to bear.

Thanking you once again,

Yours sincerely,
K. S. Thimayya

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Provincial Congress Committee
Ajmeri Gate
Delhi
15 October 1948

Revered Sardar Sahib,

Some days ago I made enquiries from Manibenji about your programme [for] the last week of this month. As it was then too early she was unable to help me in this.

I now find that 31 October is fast approaching and it was our earnest desire to associate ourselves in some suitable form in its celebration as your next birthday. Since you are carrying with you the highest honour as India's Acting Prime Minister at the moment and we are privileged to be nearest you, the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee or its members were very keen to utilise this unique opportunity to their own ends by offering their humble prayers for your long life in the form of organising a reception on that day in your honour. Please give us your consent to fulfil our long cherished wishes.

If, however, for any reason you do not approve the idea, we shall most certainly like to show our respect to you on that occasion in some other suitable form which would be approved by you, although this would mean some disappointment to us.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Radha Raman[1]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Acting Prime Minister
New Delhi

418

16 October 1948

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter of 15 October 1948.

I am hoping to leave for Bombay and Nagpur in the last week of this month. I very much appreciate the desire of the Delhi

[1] Delhi Congressman; at present Chief Executive Councillor, Delhi Metropolitan Corporation

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Provincial Congress Committee and its members to organise a reception on my birthday, but since I will not be in Delhi the question does not arise. Many thanks all the same.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Radha Raman
Provincial Congress Committee
Ajmeri Gate
Delhi

419

Government House
New Delhi
29 October 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Birthdays do not count with you and me and one day is as good or as bad as another! Yet everyone in India is in an excitement of joy over you on this day and you will let me also join in it.

We have gone through a great deal together and looking back it is not on the whole a bad record. I congratulate you most sincerely. Many dear and respected colleagues have passed away and our beloved leader who was our fountain of love and inspiration was snatched away from us in a cruel manner leaving us as in a house desolate. You have borne a great burden which you have carried with courage and ability and by the grace of God with pre-eminent success. It is an honour and joy that we hold you now in your seventy-fourth year still vigorous and eager to serve the motherland in the most trying tasks. May you continue strong for many more years, for India needs you.

Along with freedom has come a much greater amount of international interest and concern about India. In the old days when the British ruled India in accordance with the sweet will and pleasure of their bureaucracy, little notice was taken of what was done here, right or wrong. But now the statesmen and journalists of the world have their critical eyes on our doings. There is a general belief that we are strong in our resources and that we shall soon be a powerful nation. Therefore the psychological law that works out a severe and even harsh judgment on the strong and a

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sympathetic and forgiving attitude towards those who are deemed weak has made India's position in the international world somewhat trying. Numerous and perplexing are the internal problems we have to solve in building up our new free State into what we desire, but in all that work we seem to have more than severe and even hostile international public opinion to deal with. This is perhaps the price we must pay for our supposed or real strong position. We have by long opposition to the British and by the habit of public agitation that we had to carry on lost the art of soft speech. Others can hide their faults and their intentions behind a curtain of sweet reasonableness. The British Conservative Party and Press who have not forgiven us are able to give a quick lead in international opinion on Indian affairs. You and our Prime Minister have had a great deal of trouble to overcome on this account.

Our Prime Minister is as much admired by the statesmen of the world as he is the beloved of this land. Who can resist his sincerity of purpose? He is a tower of strength to us. You and he can and will overcome all difficulties abroad and internal. May God's grace be on you both so that India may grow strong and happy and be a power for peace.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Camp Bombay

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Camp 68 Marine Drive
Bombay
1 November 1948

My dear Rajaji,

I am deeply touched by your letter of congratulations and good wishes of 29 October 1948 and the extremely generous terms in which you have spoken of me for whatever humble services I have been able to render to the country.

2. The affection and regard of an old colleague like you I take for granted. It is quite possible that that affection and regard has led you into overrating me and my achievements. Nevertheless, whatever I have been able to achieve is, in a large measure, due to the support and assistance which I have received from my colleagues and the loyalty and co-operation which has been

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extended to me by my friends and members of the organisation to which I have the honour and privilege to belong.

With my sincerest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Governor-General of India
New Delhi

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TELEGRAM

1 November 1948

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Bombay

PERSONAL FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU. LOVE AND ALL GOOD WISHES ON YOUR BIRTH ANNIVERSARY. MAY YOU LIVE LONG TO CARRY WORTHILY THE GREAT BURDENS YOU HAVE UNDERTAKEN IN THE SERVICE OF INDIA.

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TELEGRAM

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Care Indembassy
Cairo

MANY THANKS YOUR AFFECTIONATE MESSAGE ON MY BIRTHDAY. AM DEEPLY TOUCHED. LOOKING FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU BACK AFTER YOUR REMARKABLY SUCCESSFUL TRIP.

VALLABHBHAI

423

The Statesman Ltd.
Statesman House
Calcutta
29 October 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

Tomorrow, I see from a draft despatch about the event on which I have been working, is your birthday; and although this

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letter, because of your tour, will not reach you in time, it offers you my warm good wishes for many happy returns.

Seeing you in Delhi last week was a real pleasure. You are a great man, on your public achievements alone, but also one who, in my case at any rate, as I have ventured to mention more than once, inspires whatever political differences may be—and some will doubtless recur—an unusual glow of personal affection. I was genuinely distressed, last spring, by news of your illness, additionally because my mother has been afflicted with a similar malady, so that I know what it means.

Prolonged good health and happiness to you! Please do not bother to acknowledge a rather impulsive private note. You and your staff will be inundated by felicitations of a more formal sort which need answering.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Stephens

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

424

Bombay
1 November 1948

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter of 29 October 1948 and for your congratulations and good wishes on my birthday. I have also seen the despatch to which you refer and which has appeared in the Statesman of the 31st. I need hardly say how much I appreciate the kind sentiments which you have expressed in your letter and which the Statesman has put forth in its columns. You know I believe in frankness and am convinced that ultimately it is frankness rather than diplomatic reserve or equivocation, which brings results. During all our contacts I have appreciated your frankness, as much as you did mine, and that is largely responsible for the personal regard which both of us entertain for each other despite political differences which at times divide us. I need hardly assure you, therefore, that I have been deeply touched by the kindness and warmth of the reference about me both in your letter and the Statesman's despatch.

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With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Ian Stephens Esq.
Editor, Statesman
Statesman House
Calcutta

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Calcutta
6 November 1948

My dear Sardar Patel,

Nowhere but in India, I think, do busy Ministers, and other leading men, spare so much time and trouble for outside individuals. Mahatma Gandhi, some years ago, when I visited him at Wardha, and was not even editor, gave the larger part of two afternoons to what was really more a matter of private conscience than a journalistic inquiry. Now comes your November 1 letter from Bombay, specially written when you must have been overwhelmingly busy with speeches, interviews and correspondence, and have too but recently recovered from serious illness.

You should not have done it. But it was quite remarkably nice of you, and I am grateful.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Stephens

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
28 September 1948

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Two days ago I went to Chatarpur, some 10 miles from Delhi, to visit a co-operative farm, which has been started by refugees. I was told there that adjoining this farm was a large area of several hundred acres which had been given, presumably by the Custodian of Evacuee Property, to Randhawa, who was till lately the Deputy Commissioner here. I was further informed that another

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several hundred acres had been given in the same way to Datar Singh.

I was greatly surprised to learn of this for a variety of reasons. For Government officials here to be given evacuee land seemed to me improper, for the Deputy Commissioner, Delhi, to be given land in Delhi province also did not seem right and for these very large areas to be given to a single individual also appears to me to be wrong in principle.

Some one told me that this was done by some kind of exchange for land in Pakistan. That does not seem to be a sufficient justification. When land is so scarce and so many unfortunate people need it, it seems to me very unfair for large slices of it to be given to our officials. I do not know if you have heard about this. I shall be grateful if you could kindly enquire.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

427

New Delhi
29 September 1948

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 September 1948 regarding transfer of lands to Randhawa and Datar Singh.

I was not aware of these transactions. In fact, the only two Ministries which could have been aware of these are the Ministries of Relief and Rehabilitation and of Agriculture who deal with lands in rural areas. If the Custodian of Evacuee Property has transferred these lands, it would be the Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry who would be concerned.

However, I am making enquiries and will let you know the position as soon as I get the required information.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

SARDAR PATEL'S STATEMENT ON CASH BALANCES

New Delhi
10 January 1948

The Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, before his departture for Jammu this morning, interviewed by the Associated Press of India regarding Mr. Ghulam Mohammad's recent statement, said:

"I have seen a summary of the Press conference held by the Finance Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad. I have not yet seen the full report. Mr. Ghulam Mohammad has made certain charges against the Government of India of bad faith and interference with the functioning of the Reserve Bank of India. In my previous statements regarding important matters involving inter-Dominion relations, I had several occasions to expose the false propaganda and distortions of facts indulged in by spokesmen of the Pakistan Government. The latest statement of the Pakistan Finance Minister is of a piece with these previous performances. I had hoped that the generous treatment accorded by us to Pakistan in the financial arrangements, to which we still adhere, would evoke a satisfactory response from that Government. But I regret they have abused our generosity and are flinging baseless accusations at the Government of India. I shall not say more at this stage beyond this that there is nothing in the attitude of the Government of India or in the procedure adopted by us in these transactions which we cannot justify before the bar of world opinion. In fact, we have scrupulously adhered to our commitments. There has been no interference whatsoever with the discretion of the Reserve Bank in any matter affecting its relations with Pakistan.

"I hope on my return from Jammu to meet members of the Press along with my colleague, the Finance Minister. We shall then give an account of facts which, I feel certain, would bear out completely the stand taken by the Government of India."

The Hindu, Madras
12 January 1948

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The following is the text of Sardar Patel's statement at a Press conference in New Delhi on 12 January 1948:

"I am sure all of you have read the Press statement of Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, Finance Minister of Pakistan, on the payment of cash balances to the Pakistan Government. The Finance Minister of Pakistan has had a varied career of responsibility as a civil servant—Finance Minister of Hyderabad State, and a participant in 'big business'. One would not normally expect in his statements the defects of 'suppressio veri' and 'suggestio falsi'. But I regret to observe that not only does his statement abound in these, but in his utter desperation at seeing his financial anticipations wrecked by the actions of his own Government in regard to Kashmir, he has cast discretion and judgment to the winds and descended down to the familiar arts of a bully and a black mailer.

"I use these epithets deliberately for to any one reading his statement dispassionately it would be obvious that he has tried to browbeat the Reserve Bank of India into submission by a liberal use of threats and insinuations, has charged the Government of India with bad faith in the hope that the charge would gain for him his coveted ransom, and has tried to invoke the assistance of international opinion in the expectation that the threatened exposure before the world would make the Government of India bend in its attitude on this subject. I quite concede that the desperate situation in which he finds himself calls for rather drastic remedies but we are entitled to expect of him a balanced approach to this problem rather than these filibustering tactics, the failure of which is as certain as day light. Further, in his overzeal to achieve his object by all manner of means, the Pakistan Finance Minister has, I would presently show, paid little attention to truth and shown little regard for facts.

"Let us first deal with his statement that 'none of us had the slightest indication that the Kashmir problem would be dragged in', his accusation of bad faith and similar other statements of an accusatory nature. To deal with these I would give in brief a resume of the course of negotiations. The series of meetings held between the representatives of the Pakistan and the Indian Government in the last week of November were intended to iron out all our differences including the question of Kashmir. The discussions held were not confined to mere partition issues, but covered Kashmir, refugees and other important evacuation matters as well. On 26 November talks on Kashmir were held in an atmosphere of hope, goodwill and cordiality, and were continued simultaneously with the discussions on financial and other questions on subsequent days. On 27 November, informal and provisional agreement was reached on the two issues of division of cash balances, and the sharing of the uncovered debt. The Pakistan representatives were in some haste and tried to hustle us into agreeing to announce these agreements. We resisted it. Indeed, on the 27th evening, I issued a statement to the Press asking them not to speculate on the

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nature of the talks, but to wait until an authoritative statement was issued after the talks had concluded.

"Here is what I said then : 'All-out efforts are being made for a settlement on all outstanding matters, but any specualtions on the nature of the talks would do more harm than good. All that I can say at present is that discussions are being held and the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister of the Pakistan Government are staying on till Saturday. A detailed statement will be issued when the talks are concluded. Till then reports about any settlement on any individual item or issue between the two Governments must be regarded as premature and lacking authority.'

"The next morning my statement which was read at a meeting at Government House at which both the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister of Pakistan were present, that we would not regard the settlement of these issues as final unless agreement had been reached on all outstanding issues. I made it quite clear then that we would not agree to any payment until the Kashmir affair was settled. Accordingly, no announcement of the agreement was made. In the meantime, Pakistan representatives postponed their departure and talks on Kashmir and other matters were continued with rather varying results on different issues. Working in this somewhat improved atmosphere, we reached a settlement on all other outstanding issues relating to partition, and the informal agreement was reported to the Partition Council at its meeting on 1 December, though they were to be reduced to writing later. This was completed on 2 December, but it was agreed even then not to make an announcement on the subject until after the Lahore discussions on Kashmir and other outstanding issues had been, as was then hoped, successfully concluded.

"The position was further confirmed by the submission made on 3 December by both the parties before the Arbitral Tribunal that the prospects of all the references, being settled were very good, that a further meeting was to be held on the 8th and 9th at Lahore and the situation would then be clearer. The discussions were resumed at Lahore on 8 and 9 December. But in the meantime, it was found that feverish attempts were being made by the Pakistan Government to secure the payment of Rs. 55 crores which it had been agreed to allocate to Pakistan out of the cash balances. We resisted these attempts. Nevertheless, evidently in an attempt to isolate the issue and force our hands contrary to the understanding reached, the Pakistan High Commissioner on 7 December gave a Press interview announcing the agreement reached on the financial issues. When, however, we stuck to our previous position and reiterated it during the Lahore discussion, though, in deference to Pakistan's insistence on the announcement of the agreement on financial issues we agreed to make a short statement on 9 December in the Legislature, which was then sitting in Delhi, the Pakistan Finance

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Minister showed also such indecent haste in rushing to the Press in this matter that he actually gave an interview on the subject on 7 December itself. Pakistan's game was by then quite clear. Armed with this understanding on the question of public announcement by us of the agreement on financial issues, their attitude on Kashmir stiffened and the prospect of agreement which seemed so near at Delhi receded. I then felt it necessary in my statement to the Assembly on 9 December to make it quite clear that the implementation of this agreement was to be as far as possible simultaneous with the settlement of the Kashmir issue. The Pakistan Government did not take any exception to this statement at the time. In the subsequent detailed statement which I made on the 7th in the presence of the Pakistan High Commissioner, I again repeated that the successful implementation of this agreement depended on the continuation of goodwill, spirit of accommodation and conciliation on the other vital issues. Quite obviously Kashmir was one of such issues. Pakistan still made no protest. To all approaches for payment of the Rs. 55 crores, we returned a negative answer. Then came the final talks on the Kashmir issue on 2 December. It was then for the first time during these discussions that the Pakistan Prime Minister took exception to our stand that the financial and Kashmir issues stood together as regards implementation and asked for immediate implementation of the payment of Rs. 55 crores. We made it clear to him then and subsequently in our telegram dated 30 December that we stood by the agreement but that in view of the hostile attitude of the Pakistan Government in regard to Kashmir the payment of the amount would have to be postponed in accordance with our stand throughout the negotiations.

"Thus it is our case that far from our having done anything unfair to Pakistan, or in breach of any agreement, it is the Pakistan representatives who were all the time trying to soft-pedal the Kashmir issue in order to secure concessions from us on the financial issues and to manoeuvre us into making an isolated public announcement on the subject without reference to other vital issues between the two Governments. We consistently and successfully resisted this despite attempts of the Pakistan High Commissioner and Finance Minister to force our hands. Far from there being bad faith on our part, we genuinely and sincerely meant this settlement as part of an overall settlement which would have been conducive to the maintenance of friendly and peaceful relations between the two sister Dominions.

"It is also our claim that in agreeing to these terms of the financial settlement, we were actuated by generous sentiments towards Pakistan and a sincere desire, as I made clear in the Partition Council, 'to see Pakistan grow into a prosperous neighbour.' We hoped that Pakistan would reciprocate on other issues which unfortunately still divided us. That the financial settlement was attractive to Pakistan and would be a great asset to Pakistan's economy is clear from the statements issued by the Pakistan High Commissioner

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and Sir Archibald Rowlands [former Finance Member of Viceroy's Council]. It is, therefore, quite plain that having secured terms which were essential to hold Pakistan's finances together, the Pakistan Government failed in their obligation to respond to India's gesture on other issues.

"I would also point out that the Government of India took a more comprehensive view of our obligation to the securing of a just and peaceful settlement than the Pakistan Government. We realised throughout that neighbourly relations between ourselves and Pakistan could be restored and maintained only if the spirit of amity, tolerance and goodwill pervaded throughout the entire field of controversy; the Pakistan Government obviously intended to take undue advantage of our generous attitude and exhibit these virtues in a narrow, restricted and selfish sphere. The need for a comprehensive view was and still is quite clear. Apart from other factors, India has taken over the entire debt of undivided India and depends on Pakistan's bona fides and goodwill to make equated payment by easy and long-term instalments of its debt to India after a four years moratorium period. We cannot, therefore, afford to let conflicts endanger our credit and security and throw into the melting pot some of the vital points in the financial agreement itself. Obviously, therefore, India must provide against strained relations worsening into open breach and thereby, as I was careful to point out in my statement of 12 December, 'placing all the good work achieved in jeopardy.'

"We are, therefore, fully justified in [preventing] Pakistan's possible continuance of aggressive actions in regard to Kashmir by postponing the implementation of the agreement. We have made it clear to the Pakistan Government more than once that we stand by the agreement which we reached. The agreement does not bind the Government of India to any fixed date for payment and we cannot reasonably be asked to make a payment of cash balances to Pakistan when an armed conflict with its forces is in progress and threatens to assume even a more dangerous character, which is likely to destroy the whole basis of the financial agreement and would endanger other parts of the agreement, such as arrangements for taking over of debt, and division of stores etc.

"The Pakistan Finance Minister claims the amount of Rs. 55 crores as belonging to Pakistan. He has apparently overlooked the fact that on 14 August 1947 after the Partition Council had decided to allocate the working balance of Rs. 20 crores to the Pakistan Government, the then undivided Government of India issued an order in the following terms [by telegram] to the Reserve Bank:

> 'PLEASE TRANSFER TWENTY, HALF OF FORTY CRORES, FROM CENTRAL CLOSING CASH BALANCE ON THE 14TH INSTANT TO PAKISTAN AND BALANCE TO INDIAN DOMINION AS OPENING BALANCE ON THE 15TH.'

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"A copy of this telegram was endorsed to the Pakistan wing of the then Finance Department, and no objection was, or has been, raised to this accounting. It follows from this that so far as the bank accounts are concerned, there is no balance of the old undivided Government to be operated upon; the money stands in the name of the Indian Dominion and it is only on the authority of the Indian Dominion that any share can be allocated to the Government of Pakistan. The relevant portion of the Partition Council minutes also runs thus :

> 'In addition to the 20 crores, already made over to Pakistan, 55 crores will be allocated to Pakistan in full and final settlement of its claim for a share of the undivided Government's cash balance and of the cash balance investment account.'

It is clear, therefore, that nothing belongs to Pakistan until the Government of India transfer the amount to its account.

"This clear-cut position makes the Pakistan Finance Minister's outburst against the Reserve Bank appear somewhat hysterical and rhetorical. The Reserve Bank cannot do anything without the specific instructions of the Government of India who are the only competent authority to operate the account. He has accused the Government of India of interfering in the discharge of its duties towards the Pakistan Government and has characterised this alleged interference not only as an unfriendly act, but as an act of aggression. I wish to say in the most emphatic terms that this accusation is completely baseless and devoid of any element of truth whatsoever. I understand that the Reserve Bank of India first received the demand for the payment of Rs. 55 crores on the 6th of this month in a memorandum handed over to the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank at Karachi. I also understand that the Governor to whom this memorandum was telegraphed by the Deputy Governor has sent an appropriate reply. So far as the Government of India are concerned, I would say that when the Reserve Bank mentioned an approach by the Pakistan Government for temporary accommodation from the Bank, the Government of India made it clear to the Bank that it was a matter for the Bank alone to decide. Indeed, the Government of India have made every effort to avoid dragging the Reserve Bank into the controversy. The blame for attempting to force the Reserve Bank into taking sides must rest with the Pakistan Finance Minister. Neither the manner nor the nature of the attempt reflects creditably on the honesty of purpose and the motives of the Pakistan Government.

"Gentlemen, I think I have said enough to prove how unfounded and insubstantial are the allegations made by the Pakistan Finance Minister against the Government of India. We have also shown how we have held consistently to the position that the settlement of the financial issues cannot be isolated from that of other vital issues and has to be implemented simultaneously. There can

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be no question of our repudiating the agreement reached. We only desire that the appropriate atmosphere conditioned by the agreement must be created for its implementation. If the Pakistan Government desires for payment of cash balance in advance, it is obvious that they are motivated by factors wholly opposed to the spirit underlying the agreement. We are thus fully justified in resisting these machinations which, if successful, would vitiate the very basis of the agreement and adversely affect, by facilitating Pakistan's aggressive designs on India, the implementation of other vital parts of the agreement."

APPENDIX TWO

Pakistan accused India of bad faith in the matter of payment of cash balances. This was refuted by Sardar Patel who said:-"The Pakistan Government have abused our generosity and are bringing baseless accusations on the Government of India."

Agency reports on this and Gandhi's reference to it at his prayer meetings in New Delhi while fasting, and Prime Minister Nehru's statement have been taken from The Hindu of Madras dated 12 January to 19 January 1948

New Delhi
January 12, 1948

Refuting the charge of 'bad faith' made against the Government of India by the Finance Minister of Pakistan, Sardar Patel asserted in an interview that the generous treatment accorded to Pakistan in the financial arrangements concluded between the two Dominions, had not evoked a satisfactory response. "The Pakistan Government," said Sardar Patel, "have abused our generosity and are flinging baseless accusations on the Government of India."

"In fact," Sardar Patel declared, "we have scrupulously adhered to our commitments," and added that there was nothing in the attitude of the Government of India which could not be justified before the bar of world opinion.

January 14, 1948

Gandhiji had dictated a message to be read out to the prayer audience this afternoon, but later he decided to go to the meeting and address the gathering. He said he had come in spite of the doctor's objections. But from tomorrow he would probably not be able to walk to the prayer ground. He had the strength today and he used it though the doctors had advised him to conserve it. He was in God's hands. If He wanted him to live he would not die; he did not want his faith in God to weaken.

Continuing his speech without any reference to the dictated notes, Gandhiji said, "Cablegrams and telegrams are pouring in from far and near;

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some, in my opinion, weighty and congratulating me on my resolve and entrusting me to God. Some others in friendliest terms appeal to me to abandon the fast and assure me that they would befriend their neighbours irrespective of caste and creed and try to carry out the spirit of my message that accompanied the fast. I am asking Pyarelalji to give a few selections from the abundance which is hourly increasing to the Press. They are from Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others. If those who have given me assurances—some of the senders represent associations and groups—and carry them out faithfully they will certainly have contributed largely to the hastening of the stoppage of the fast. Mridulaben asks the following question from Lahore, where she is in touch with Pakistan authorities as also the common Muslims: 'There are friends here who are very anxious about Gandhiji's health and are eager to know what Gandhiji would like them to do on this side, and what he expects from his Muslim friends in Pakistan, including those who are in political parties and in Government service.'

"It is pleasing to think there are Muslim friends who are anxious about my health and more so to know that they are eager for the information that Mridulaben seeks. To all senders of the messages and to the seekers in Lahore, I wish to say that the fast is a process of self-purification and is intended to invite all who are in sympathy with the mission of the fast themselves to take part in the process of self-purification, whether they are in the service of the Pakistan Government or whether they are members of political parties or others.

"You have heard of the cowardly attack on the Sikhs in Karachi. Innocent men, women and children were butchered, looted and others have had to flee. Now comes the news of an attack on a refugee train at Gujarat. The train was carrying non-Muslim refugees from the Frontier Province. Large numbers are reported to have been killed and women abducted. It distresses me. How long can the Union put up with such things? How long can I bank upon the patience of the Hindus and Sikhs in spite of my fast? Pakistan has got to put a stop to this state of affairs. They must purify their hearts and pledge themselves that they will not rest till the Hindus and Sikhs can return and live in safety in Pakistan.

"Supposing that there is a wave of self-purification throughout India, Pakistan will become Pak. It will be a State in which past wrongs will have been forgotten, past distinctions will have been buried, the least and the smallest in Pakistan will command the same respect and the same protection of life and property that the Quaid-i-Azam enjoys. Such a Pakistan can never die. Then and not till then shall I repent that I ever called it a sin, as I am afraid I must hold today it is. I want to live to see that Pakistan not on paper, not in the orations of Pakistan orators, but in the daily life of every Pakistani Muslim. Then the inhabitants of the Union will forget that there

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ever was any enmity between them and if I am not mistaken, the Union will proudly copy Pakistan and if I am alive I shall ask her to excel Pakistan in well-doing. The fast is a bid for nothing less. Be it said to the shame of those of us, who are in the Union, that we have readily copied Pakistan's bad manners.

"Before I ever knew anything of politics in my early youth, I dreamt the dream of communal unity of the heart. I shall jump in the evening of my life, like a child, to feel that the dream has been realised in this life. The wish for living the full span of life portrayed by the seers of old and which they permit us to set down at 125 years, will then revive. Who would not risk sacrificing his life for the realisation of such a dream? Then, we shall have real Swaraj. Then, though legally and geographically we may still be two States, in daily life no one will think that we were separate States.

"The vista before me seems to me to be, as it must be to you, too glorious to be true, and yet like a child in a famous picture drawn by a famous painter, I shall not be happy till I have got it. I live and want to live for no lesser goal. Let the seekers from Pakistan help me to come as near the goal as it is humanly possible. A goal ceases to be one when it is reached. The nearest approach is always possible. What I have said holds good irrespective of whether others do it or not. It is open to every individual to purify himself or herself so as to render him or her fit for that land of promise. I remember to have read, I forget whether in the Delhi Fort or the Agra Fort when I visited them in 1896, a verse on one of the gates, which when translated reads: 'If there is a paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here.' That Fort with all its magnificence at its best was no paradise in my estimation. But I should love to see that verse with justice inscribed on the gates of Pakistan at all the entrances. In such a paradise, whether it is in the Union or in Pakistan, there will be neither paupers nor beggars, nor high nor low, neither millionaire employers nor half-starved employees nor intoxicating drinks nor drugs. There will be the same respect for women as is vouchsafed to men and the chastity and purity of men and women will be zealously guarded. Where every woman, except one's wife, will be treated by men of all religions as sister or daughter, according to her age. Where there will be no untouchability and where there will be equal respect for all faiths. I hope, everyone who listens to me or reads these lines will forgive me if, stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling life-giving sunshine, I allow myself to indulge in this ecstacy. Let this assure the doubters and sceptics that I have not the slightest desire that the fast should be ended as quickly as possible. It matters little if the ecstatic wishes of a fool like me are never realised and the fast is never broken. I am content to wait as long as it may be necessary, but it will hurt me to think that people have acted merely in order to save me. I claim that God has inspired this fast and it will be

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broken only when and if He wishes it. No human agency has ever been known to thwart, nor will it ever thwart, divine will."

January 15

"The fast which I have undertaken is a process of self-purification for all. It would be wrong to make any insinuation against the purity of the step," said Mahatma Gandhi in a written message which was read out to the prayer audience this evening.

Gandhiji in his message said: "Newspapermen sent me a message two hours after my prayer speech of last evening, asking to see me as they had some doubts to be cleared. After a heavy day's work I felt disinclined, out of some exhaustion, to see them for discussion. I, therefore, told Pyarelalji to inform them to excuse me and further tell them that they should put down the questions in writing and send them to me next morning. They did so."

The first question is: You have undertaken the fast when there was no disturbance of any kind in any part of the Indian Dominion.

Reply: What was it if it was not a disturbance for a crowd to make an organised and a determined attempt to take forcible possession of Muslims' houses? The disturbance was such that the military had to resort reluctantly to teargas and even to a little shooting, if only overhead, before the crowd dispersed. It would have been foolish for me to wait till the last Muslim had been turned out of Delhi by subtle undemonstrative methods, which I would describe as killing by inches.

Q.: You have stated that you could not give any reply to the Muslims who come to you with their tale of fear and insecurity and who have complained that Sardar Patel, who is in charge of Home Affairs, is anti-Muslim. You have also stated that Sardar Patel is no longer your "yes-man" as he used to be. These factors create the impression that the fast is more intended to bring about a change of heart in the Sardar and thereby amounts to a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. It would be helpful if you can clear the position.

A.: I feel that my reply was precise, not admitting of more interpretations than one. The suggested interpretation never crossed my mind. If I had known that my statement could bear any such interpretation, I should have dispelled the doubt in anticipation. Many Muslim friends had complained of the Sardar's so-called anti-Muslim attitude. I had, with a degree of suppressed pain, listened to them without giving any explanation. The fast freed me from this self-imposed restraint, and I was able to assure the critics that they were wrong in isolating him from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and me, whom they gratuitously raise to the sky. This isolation did them no good. The Sardar had a bluntness of speech which sometimes unintentionally hurt, though his heart was expansive enough to accommodate all. Thus my

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statement was meant deliberately to free a life-long and faithful comrade from any unworthy reproach. Lest my hearers should go away with the idea that my compliment carried the meaning that I could treat the Sardar as my "yes-man," as he was affectionately described, I balanced the compliment by adding the proviso that he was too masterful to be anybody's "yes-man." When he was my "yes-man," he permitted himself to be so named, because whatever I said instinctively appealed to him. Great as he was in his own field and a very able administrator, he was humble enough to begin his political education under me, because, as he explained to me, he could not take to the politics in vogue at the time I began my public career in India.

When power descended on him, he saw that he could no longer successfully apply the method of non-violence which he used to wield with signal success. I have made the discovery that what I and the people with me had termed non-violence was not the genuine article, but a weak copy known as passive resistance. Naturally, passive resistance can avail of nothing to a ruler. Imagine a weak ruler being able to represent any people. He would only degrade his masters who, for the time being, had placed themselves under his trust. I know that the Sardar could never betray or degrade his trust.

Mahatma Gandhi added: I wonder if, with a knowledge of this background to my statement, anybody would dare call my fast a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. If there is any such person, I can only tell him that he would degrade and hurt himself, never the Sardar or me. Have I not before now said emphatically that no outside power can really degrade a man? He only can degrade himself. Though I know that this sentence is irrelevant here, it is such a truth that it bears repetition on all occasions.

My fast, as I have stated in plain language, is undoubtedly on behalf of the Muslim minority in the Union, and, therefore, it is necessarily against the Hindus and Sikhs of the Union and the Muslims of Pakistan. It is also on behalf of the minorities in Pakistan as in the case of the Muslim minority in the Union. This is a clumsy compression of the idea I have already explained. I cannot expect the fast undertaken by a very imperfect and weak mortal as I truly confess I am to have the potency to make its proteges proof against all danger. The fast is a process of self-purification for all. It would be wrong to make any insinuation against the purity of the step.

Q.: Your fast has been undertaken on the eve of the meeting of the United Nations Security Council and so soon after the Karachi riot and the Gujarat massacre. What publicity the latter incidents received in the foreign Press is not known. But undoubtedly your fast has overshadowed all other incidents. And Pakistan representatives would not be worth their past reputation if they do not seize the opportunity to declare that the Mahatma has undertaken the fast to bring sanity among his Hindu followers, who have been

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making the life of the Muslims in India impossible. Truth takes a long time to reach the far corners of the globe. But, in the meantime, your fast may have the unfortunate effect of prejudicing our case in the eyes of the United Nations.

A.: This question does not demand nor needs any elaborate answer. From all I have known of the powers and peoples outside India, I make bold to say that the fast has created only a healthy impression. Outsiders who are able to take an impartial and unbiased view of what is happening in India cannot distort the purpose of the fast to bring sanity to all those who inhabit both the Union and Pakistan. It is impossible to save the Muslims in the Union if the Muslim majority in Pakistan do not behave as decent men and women. Happily for the cause, the Muslims of Pakistan, as Mridulaben's enquiry of yesterday made clear, have become wide awake to a sense of their duty. The United Nations know that my fast aids them to come to a right decision and to give the right guidance to the newly made two Dominions.

January 15

The Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in a separate statement explaining the Government's decision, said: "We have come to this decision in the hope that this gesture, in accord with India's high ideals and Gandhiji's noble standards, will convince the world of our earnest desire for peace and goodwill. We earnestly trust also that this will go a long way towards producing a situation which will induce Gandhiji to break his fast. That fast of course had nothing to do with this particular matter, and we have thought of it because of our desire to help in every way in easing the present tension.

"The Government's decision in regard to the payment of the cash balances to Pakistan has been taken after the most careful thought and after consultation with Gandhiji. I should like to make it clear that this does not mean any change in our unanimous view about the strength and validity of the Government's position as set out in various statements made by distinguished colleagues of mine. Nor do we accept the facts or arguments advanced in the latest statement of the Finance Minister of Pakistan.

"Six months ago we witnessed a miracle in Calcutta where ill will changed overnight into good will through the alchemy of a similar fast. The alchemist who worked this change was described by our Governor-General as 'the one-man boundary force which succeeded when the boundary force of 50,000 men in West Punjab did not succeed in keeping the peace. This unarmed knight of non-violence is functioning again. May the same alchemy work again in India and elsewhere.'

"We have sought to remove one major cause of dispute and argument between India and Pakistan, and we hope that other problems will also be resolved.

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"Let it be remembered that the people of Kashmir are suffering from a brutal and unprovoked invasion, and we have pledged ourselves to help them to gain their freedom. To that pledge we shall hold and we shall do our utmost to redeem it. We seek their freedom not for any gain to us but to prevent the ravishing of a fair country and a peaceful people."

January 18

The hope that the Pakistan Government would respond to the gesture made by the Government of India in ordering payment of Pakistan's share of cash balance was expressed by Gandhiji in a message read at the prayer meeting on Friday.

Gandhiji said: "The present gesture on the part of the Government of India is one of unmixed goodwill. It has put the Pakistan Government on its honour. It ought to lead to an honourable settlement not only of the Kashmir question but of all the differences between the two Dominions."

On the fifth day of the fast, Gandhiji continued to be cheerful and in good spirits though his weakness has increased.

January 16

In his message to the prayer gathering today Gandhiji said: "It is never a light matter for any responsible Cabinet to alter a deliberate, settled policy. Yet our Cabinet, responsible in every sense of the term, has with equal deliberation, yet promptness, unsettled a settled fact. They deserve the warmest thanks from the whole country, from Kashmir to Cape Comorin and from Karachi to the Assam frontier. And I know that all the nations of the earth will proclaim this gesture as one which only a large-hearted Cabinet like ours could rise to.

"This is no policy of appeasement of Muslims. This is a policy, if you like, of self-appeasement. No Cabinet worthy of being representative of a large mass of mankind can afford to take any step merely because it is likely to win the hasty applause of an unthinking public. In the midst of insanity should not our best representatives retain sanity and bravely prevent a wreck of the ship of the State under their management? What then was the actuating motive? It was my fast. It changed the whole outlook. Without the fast they could not go beyond what the law permitted and required them to do.

"But the present gesture on the part of the Government of India is one of unmixed goodwill. It has put the Pakistan Government on its honour. It ought to lead to an honourable settlement not only of the Kashmir question but of all the differences between the two Dominions. Friendship should replace the present enmity. Demand of equity superseded the letter of law. There is a homely maxim of law which has been in practice for centuries in England that when Common Law seems to fail, equity comes to the rescue.

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Not long ago there were even separate courts, one for the administration of Law and of equity.

"Considered in this setting, there is no room for questioning the utter justice of this act of the Union Government. If we want a precedent, there is a striking one at our disposal in the form of what is popularly known as the MacDonald Award. That Award was really the unanimous judgment of not only the members of the British Cabinet, but also of the majority of the members of the Second Round Table Conference. It was undone overnight in Yeravda prison.

"I have been asked to end the fast because of this great act of the Union Government. I wish I could persuade myself to do so. I know that the medical friends who, of their own volition and at considerable sacrifice meticulously examine me from day to day, are getting more and more anxious as the fast is prolonged. Because of defective kidney function, they dread not so much my instantaneous collapse as permanent after-effects of any further prolongation.

"I did not embark upon the fast after consultation with medical men, be they however able. The sole guide, even dictator, was God, the infallible and omnipotent. If he has any further use for this frail body of mine, he will keep it in spite of the prognostications of medical men and women. I am in His hands. Therefore, I hope you will believe me when I say that I dread neither death nor permanent injury even if I survive. But I do feel that this warning of medical friends should, if the country has any use for me, hurry the people up to close their ranks and like brave men and women, that we ought to be under hard-earned freedom, we should trust even those whom we may suspect as our enemies. Brave people disdain distrust.

"The letter of my vow will be satisfied if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi bring about a union, which not even a conflagration around them in all the other parts of India or Pakistan will be strong enough to break. Happily, the people in both the Dominions seem to have instinctively realised that the fittest answer to the fast should be a complete friendship between the two Dominions, such that members of all communities should be able to go to either Dominion without the slightest fear of molestation. Self-purification demands nothing less. It will be wrong for the rest [?] of the two Dominions to put a heavy strain upon Delhi. After all, the inhabitants of the Union are not super-human. In the name of the people, our Government have taken a liberal step without counting the cost. What will be Pakistan's counter-gesture? The ways are many if there is the will. Is it there?"

Before Mahatma Gandhi's dictated message was read out to the prayer audience, he addressed them on the microphone from his bed. He said he had not expected that he would be able to speak to them today, but they would be pleased to learn that, if anything, his voice was less feeble today than yesterday.

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He could not explain it except for the grace of God. He had never felt so well on the fourth day of the fast in the past. If all of them continued to participate in the process of self-purification, he would probably have the strength to speak to them till the end. He was in no hurry to break the fast. Hurry would spoil matters. He did not want anyone to come and tell him that things had been set right while the process was incomplete.

If Delhi became peaceful in the real sense of the term, it would have its repercussions all over the country. He had no wish to live unless peace reigned in the two Dominions.

January 17

Mahatma Gandhi has promised to break his fast if seven conditions were properly carried out by the people. This was announced by Maulana Azad, while addressing a huge gathering at Azad Maidan in New Delhi today.

The conditions include the restoration of mosques which have been converted into temples to Muslims, allowing those Muslim refugees who had left Delhi for Pakistan to return to Delhi if they so desired, and allowing Muslims to travel in trains without fear. There should be no social boycott of Muslims and Muslims should be allowed to settle in any place they like.

January 19

Mahatma Gandhi has broken his fast.

Gandhiji, who has been undergoing the ordeal for the past six days, ended it at 12.40 p.m. on Sunday when he sipped a small glassful of orange juice.

Gandhiji's decision to break the fast came after an assurance was given to him by the members of the Peace Committee that the conditions imposed by Gandhiji for termination of his fast would be implemented.

The termination of the fast was preceded by an unprecedented demonstration of communal unity in Delhi. Peace processions from all parts of the capital marched to Birla House, where Gandhiji is staying, and shouted unity slogans and appealed to Gandhiji to break his fast.

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